FULL 68 PAGES

AMAZING STORIES

Sinister TALES

APPROVED COMIC

No 82

1/-

HOW DO YOU CATCH A GHOST?

Introducing... THAT DARLING OF DARKNESS, NIGHTSHADE

CAPTAIN ATOM VS THE GHOST

THE SECURITY OF THE WHOLE FREE WORLD WAS AT STAKE! EVERY AGENT OF THE UNITED STATES WAS PUT ON EXTRA ALERT! THAT'S HOW CAPTAIN ATOM CAME TO BE ALLIED WITH NIGHTSHADE, ONE OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE SPY SMASHERS THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS EVER HAD! TOGETHER THIS POWERFUL PAIR FIND THEMSELVES CONFRONTING AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TASK OF CAPTURING A MAN WHO COULD DISAPPEAR AT WILL! **BUT HOW DO YOU CATCH A GHOST?**

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PENTAGON BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. ...

WE'RE GLAD THE PRESIDENT PUT YOU ON THIS CASE, CAPTAIN ATOM! MAYBE YOU AND THE OTHER AGENT ASSIGNED TO THIS CASE CAN DO WHAT ALL THE OTHERS COULDN'T!

THAT THING WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE GHOST HAS BEEN CAUSING HAVOC FOR PRIVATE INDUSTRY! WE NOW FEEL HE WILL STRIKE AT THE GOVERNMENT BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHERE!

YOUR JOB IS TO WORK WITH ANOTHER AGENT AND CATCH THAT THING! SPIRIT OR MAN, HE HAS TO BE STOPPED!

GHOSTS HAVE NO USE FOR INDUSTRIAL SECRETS OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION!

IT'S PROBABLY AN OUTER SPACE BEING OR A VERY CLEVER MAN!

WHO'S THIS AGENT THAT I'LL BE WORKING WITH?

I'LL CALL HER RIGHT NOW!

HER?? A WOMAN AGENT?!

RIGHT! THAT DARLING OF DARKNESS, NIGHTSHADE, WILL BE YOUR PARTNER! RIGHT NOW SHE IS IN ANOTHER PART OF THE BUILDING!

NIGHTSHADE? WHO IS SHE? I NEVER HEARD OF HER!

THIS IS THE FIRST CHANCE WE'VE HAD TO USE HER SINCE SHE OFFERED US HER SERVICES! SHE'S WELL TRAINED AND VERY ABLE, DESPITE THE GREAT DEAL OF MYSTERY THAT SURROUNDS HER!

I CAME AS SOON AS I GOT... OOPS!
EASY NOW! I EXPECTED TO MEET YOU BUT NOT IN SUCH A HURRIED FASHION.

LET'S SKIP THE PLEASANTRIES FOR THE MOMENT! THIS IS TOO IMPORTANT TO WAIT! YOU CAN GET ACQUAINTED LATER!

YOU'VE BOTH BEEN BRIEFED ON THIS GHOST AFFAIR! WE THINK THAT HE IS PLANNING SOMETHING BIG AND I'M HOPING THAT THE TWO OF YOU CAN GET TO HIM BEFORE HE SUCCEEDS!

IN THE ENVELOPES ARE YOUR INVITATIONS TO A PARTY BEING GIVEN TONIGHT BY ALEC NOIS! WE ARE CERTAIN THAT A FEW OF THE GHOST'S AGENTS WILL TRY TO PASS INFORMATION THERE TONIGHT! WATCH FOR THEM AND TRY TO FIND OUT WHERE THE GHOST WILL STRIKE NEXT!

I BETTER HURRY AND GET READY FOR THAT PARTY! A WOMAN NEVER HAS ENOUGH TIME TO GET DRESSED, YOU KNOW!
YOU'D BETTER DO THE SAME, CAPTAIN! YOU'LL FIND KEYS TO A SPECIAL APARTMENT INSIDE THE ENVELOPE! YOU'LL FIND CIVILIAN CLOTHES THERE AND EVERYTHING ELSE THAT YOU'LL NEED!

MEANWHILE...IN ANOTHER PART OF WASHINGTON...

HA! IF SOME OF THE PEOPLE I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH COULD SEE ME NOW! IT WOULD REALLY SHOCK THEM!!

I STILL REMEMBER HOW THE GIRLS USED TO TALK ABOUT ME...

ALEC IS REALLY A GOOD LOOKER, SUE!

LOOKS AREN'T EVERYTHING, JAN! HIS FOLKS DON'T HAVE THE MONEY SO THAT HE COULD BUY A CAR TO TAKE YOU OUT IN!

WITH GIRLS, IT WAS MONEY! THE FELLOWS HAD A DIFFERENT REASON FOR AVOIDING ME...

MAYBE WE SHOULD'VE ASKED ALEC TO PLAY?

NAW, HE WOULDN'T HAVE TIME! HE HAS TO GO HOME AND STUDY!

BUT I WAS ABLE TO CHANGE MY PENNILESS STATE THAT FORTUNATE DAY IN MY LABORATORY YEARS LATER...

I'VE DONE IT! THE TELEPORTATION MACHINE WORKS!

I COULD HAVE GIVEN MY INVENTION TO THE WORLD AND STILL BE WORKING IN A LAB SOMEWHERE! BUT THE MEMORY OF ALL THOSE YEARS WITHOUT MONEY OR FRIENDS STOPPED ME!

I'LL USE THE POWER OF THIS INVENTION FOR *MYSELF!*

WITH MY INVENTION SEWN INTO THE HANDS OF MY GHOST COSTUME, I WAS ABLE TO STEAL ANYTHING I WANTED...

AND AFTER THE PARTY TONIGHT, I'LL BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING I WANT!

ONCE I LEARN WHERE THE FLOOR PLANS FOR FORT KNOX ARE LOCATED, I'LL BE ABLE TO PUT OPERATION GOLDEN GHOST INTO ACTION! HOW WILL ANYONE BE ABLE TO STOP ME WHEN I CAN GET INTO ANY PLACE! HA, HA, HA!

MEANWHILE, CAPTAIN ADAM PREPARES FOR AN EVENING OUT...

I'LL BET THAT FEMALE AGENT CAUSES MORE HEADACHES THAN THE GHOST!

WHILE ELSEWHERE, IN THE APARTMENT OF EVE EDEN, ALIAS *NIGHTSHADE*...

...IMAGINE! ME WORKING WITH CAPTAIN ATOM!

LATER, AT THE ALEC NOIS PARTY...

THIS LOOKS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE! WITH ALL THESE PEOPLE AROUND I'M SUPPOSED TO SPOT SOMETHING UNUSUAL AND INVESTIGATE!

THE GHOST COULD BE ANYONE IN THIS ROOM! AND NIGHTSHADE... WHERE OR WHO IS SHE? SHE RAN OFF BEFORE WE COULD PREPARE A RECOGNITION CODE!

WELL, BETTER KEEP MY EYES OPEN! THERE'S OUR HOST, ALEC NOIS! WONDER HOW HE MADE HIS FIRST MILLION?

SUDDENLY ALL EYES TURN TO THE MAIN DOOR AS MISS EVE EDEN ENTERS! THE LEADER OF THE JET SET HAS ARRIVED AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT...

REMEMBER, EVE, YOU'RE NIGHTSHADE ON AN ASSIGNMENT! WONDER IF CAPTAIN ATOM IS HERE YET!

THE PARTY WILL REALLY START NOW THAT EVE IS HERE!

I WONDER WHAT HER SENATOR FATHER SAID WHEN HE GOT THE BILL FOR THE DRESS SHE'S WEARING!

EVE, YOU LOOK STUNNING! LET ME GET YOU SOME PUNCH!
YOU'RE A DEAR, ALEC!
I WONDER WHAT HE WOULD SAY IF HE KNEW HE WAS TALKING TO NIGHTSHADE.

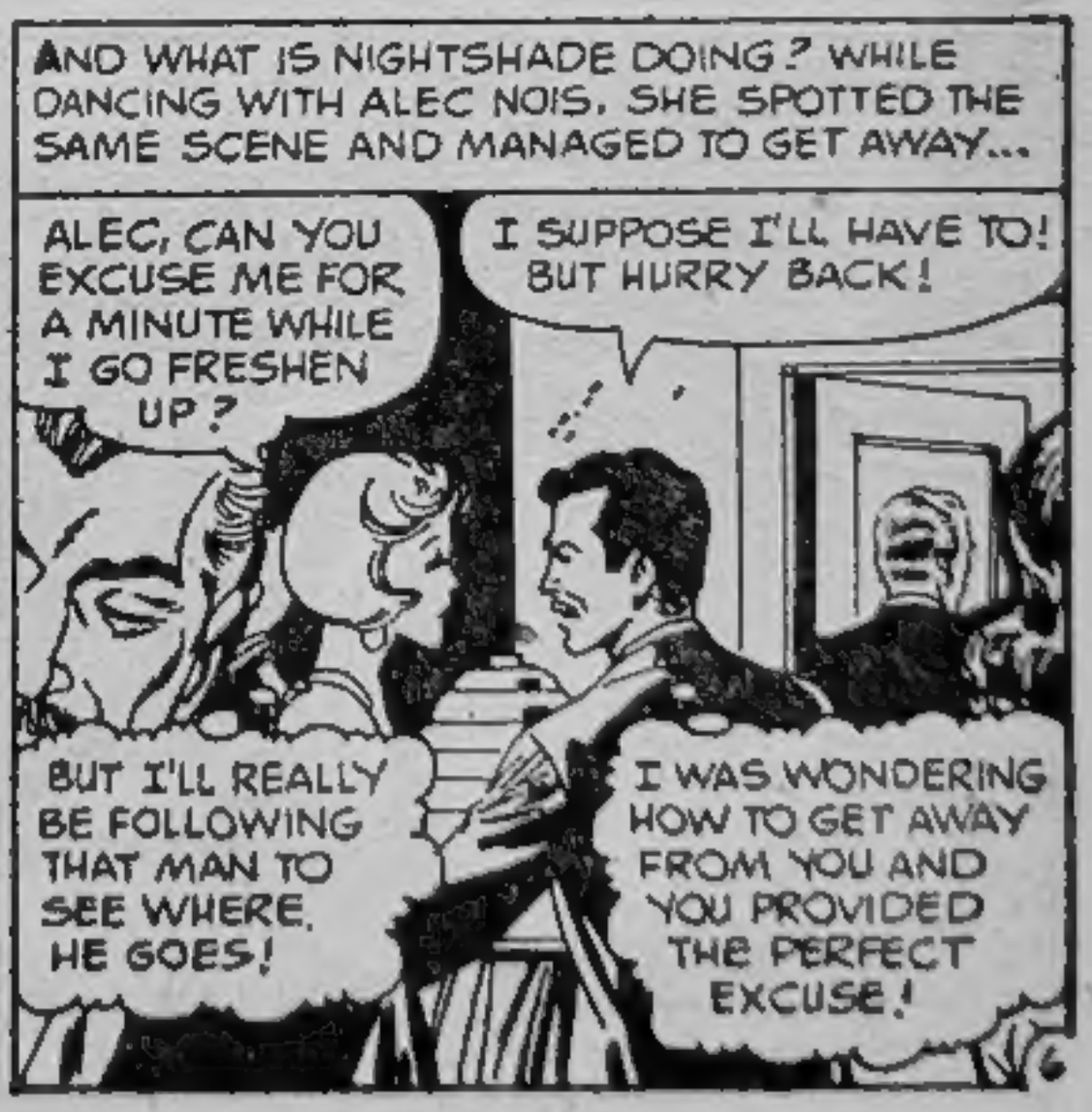
SHE'S EVEN BETTER LOOKING IN PERSON AFTER ALL THOSE PHOTOS I'VE SEEN OF HER IN THE PAPERS! MISS EDEN IS ENOUGH TO TEMPT ANY ADAM, EVEN CAPTAIN ATOM!

BUT BEFORE CAPTAIN ATOM GETS A CHANCE TO MEET MISS EDEN, HE SPOTS SOMETHING STRANGE...
LOOKS LIKE PLEASURE WILL HAVE TO WAIT! WHATEVER THAT WAITER COLLECTED DIDN'T LOOK LIKE AN EMPTY GLASS!

I'LL BE BACK IN A SECOND, MAX! I WANT TO SEE IF ANYONE IS IN THE LIBRARY!
AND I WANT TO SEE ALSO!

PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE MUST BE IN MY BLOOD! NOW TO POUNCE ON MY FRIEND AND SEE WHAT KIND OF "CHEESE" HE RECEIVED!

I'VE A MESSAGE FOR THE SPIRIT WORLD! THE PAPERS ARE IN SECTION 18 OF THE MAIN COMPLEX!
THIS ONE IS ONLY SMALL FRY! IF I CAN LOCATE NIGHTSHADE, SHE'LL KNOW WHERE "18" IS AND HOW WE CAN GET THERE!


AND WHAT IS NIGHTSHADE DOING? WHILE DANCING WITH ALEC NOIS, SHE SPOTTED THE SAME SCENE AND MANAGED TO GET AWAY...
ALEC, CAN YOU EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE WHILE I GO FRESHEN UP?
I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO! BUT HURRY BACK!
BUT I'LL REALLY BE FOLLOWING THAT MAN TO SEE WHERE HE GOES!
I WAS WONDERING HOW TO GET AWAY FROM YOU AND YOU PROVIDED THE PERFECT EXCUSE!

LUCKY THE CAR IS NEARBY! I CAN QUESTION HIM AS NIGHTSHADE! . .

LOOKS LIKE I BEAT CAPTAIN ATOM TO THE FIRST LEAD!

HOW ABOUT PLAYING A LITTLE "INFORMATION PLEASE"?... WITH NIGHTSHADE!
WHA... WHO??

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO HURT A POOR DEFENSELESS LITTLE GIRL, WOULD YOU?
AYE!! YOU'RE ABOUT AS DEFENSELESS AS A WILDCAT!

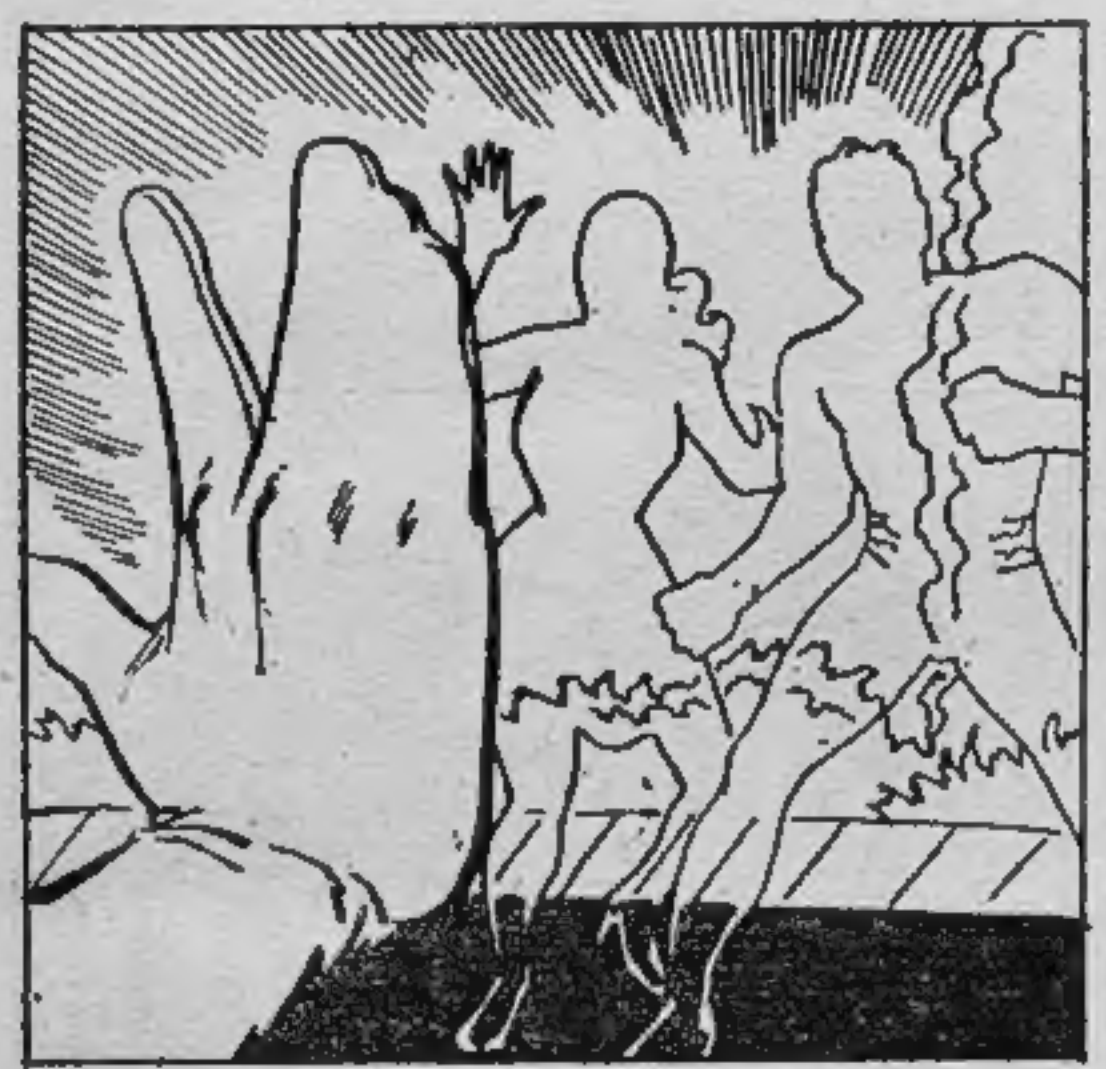
NOW SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME WHAT WAS ON THAT PAPER YOU PASSED! MY FEMININE CURIOSITY IS AROUSED!
THE GHOST WILL KILL ME IF I DO!

BUT SUDDENLY, OUT OF NOWHERE, THE GHOST APPEARS...
I DON'T SEE WHY YOU PLAY SO ROUGH WITH MY MEN! PERHAPS YOU WOULD DO BETTER DOING IT TO ME!
I NEVER EXPECTED TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO! BUT IF YOU INSIST!

NOW I'VE GOT... WHERE ARE YOU?
HA, HA! DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CATCH A GHOST!

IT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE BUT I'D LIKE TO TRY!
CAPTAIN ATOM!
YOU'RE MOST WELCOME TO TRY! BUT SOME OTHER TIME!

RIGHT NOW I'M SORRY THAT YOU HAVE TO LEAVE! BUT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET AWAY UNLESS YOU DO! GOODBYE!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DID WITH THEM, BUT I'M SURE GLAD YOU DID!
STOP THE PRATTLE! WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO!
AND SO THE GHOST AND HIS CRONEY LEAVE TO GET THE GOLDEN GHOST OPERATION INTO ACTION! BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO NIGHT-SHADE AND CAPTAIN ATOM?

NO SOONER DID THE GHOST POINT AT NIGHTSHADE AND CAPTAIN ATOM, THEN THEY FELT THEMSELVES MOVING INTO A WORLD OF NO DIMENSIONS! IT WAS LIKE BEING SOLID IN A WORLD WHERE NOTHING ELSE EXISTS...
NIGHTSHADE, ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M STILL ALIVE, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN! WHERE ARE WE?

I DON'T KNOW BUT I'M GOING TO TRY AND FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE!

WAIT! IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, WE'LL SUDDENLY FIND OURSELVES BACK WHERE WE WERE WHEN THE GHOST POINTED AT US!

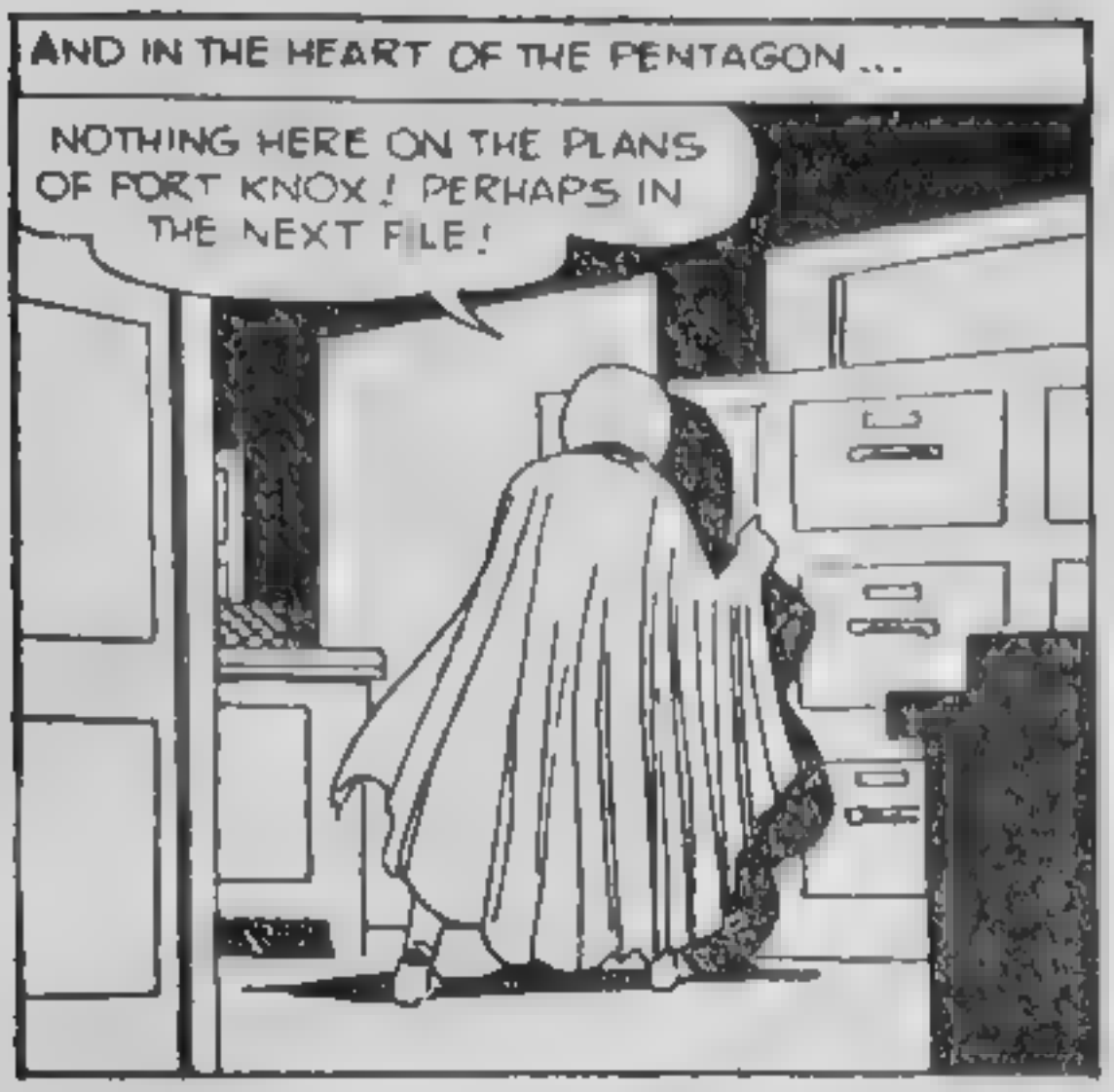
I'M STARTING TO DISAPPEAR AGAIN!
I'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL WHEN WE'VE GOT EARTH UNDER OUR FEET AGAIN!

AND JUST AS SUDDENLY AS THEY FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE OTHER WORLD, THE PAIR FOUND THEMSELVES BACK WHERE THEY ORIGINALLY WERE...
I WAS RIGHT! THE GHOST PULLED A DELAYING TRICK TO GET US OUT OF THE WAY SO HE COULD ESCAPE!
YOU MEAN HE MADE US DISAPPEAR! WHATEVER POWER HE'S GOT, IT SURE HAS TO BE STRONG FOR HIM TO DO THE TRICK TO OTHERS!

WELL, WE CAN'T SPEND THE WHOLE NIGHT HERE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HIS POWERS! WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE GHOST AND FAST!
THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO WORK ON IS THE MESSAGE I HEARD BEFORE! THE GHOST IS PROBABLY ON HIS WAY TO SECTION 18 OF THE MAIN COMPLEX!

SECTION 18 IS A SECRET FILE AND MAP ROOM LOCATED THREE LEVELS BELOW THE MAIN FLOOR OF THE PENTAGON. WE BETTER GET THERE FAST!

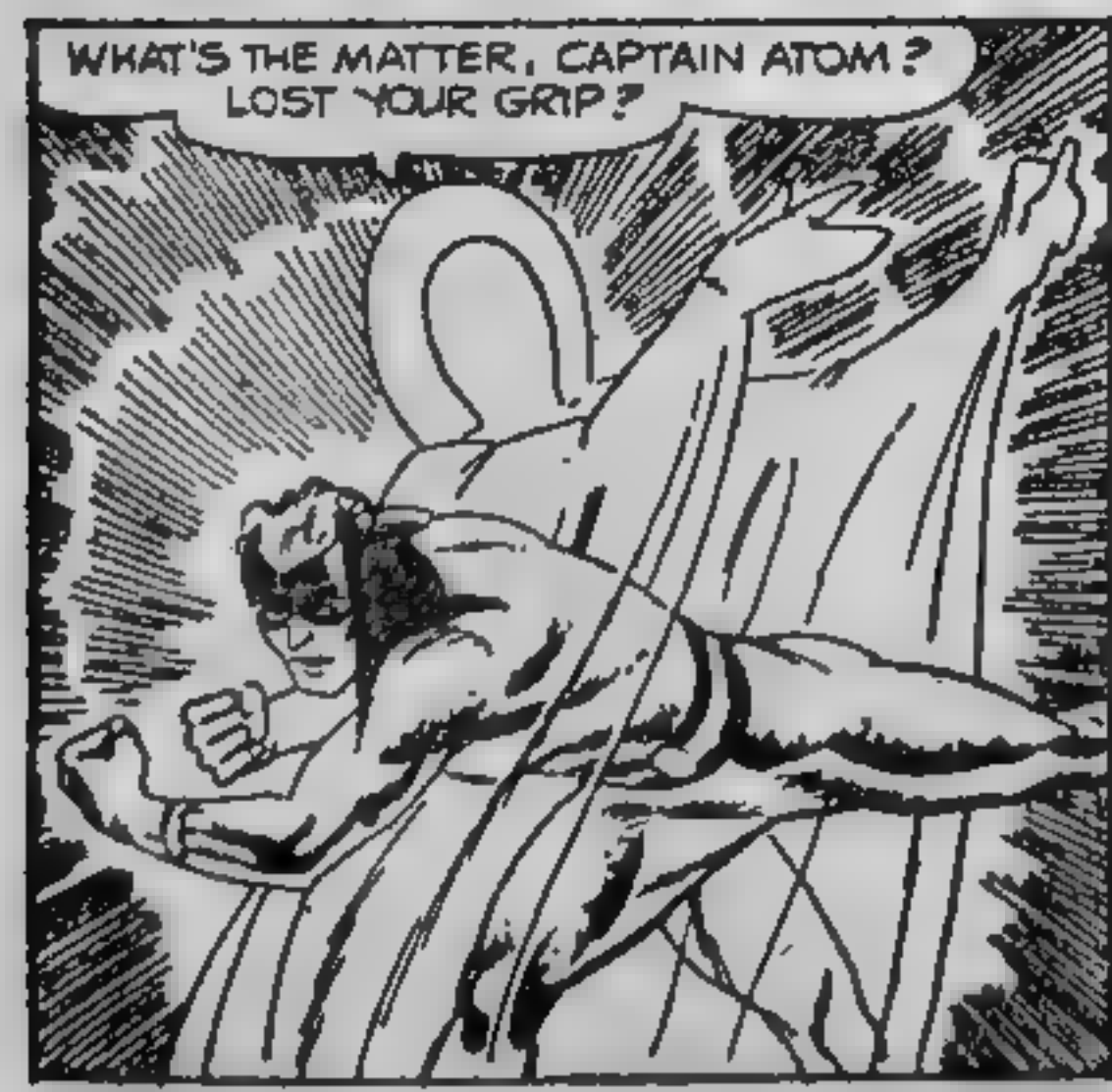
NO SOONER SAID THAN DONE!


AND IN THE HEART OF THE PENTAGON ...
NOTHING HERE ON THE PLANS OF FORT KNOX! PERHAPS IN THE NEXT FILE!

AT LAST! I'VE GOT IT!
AND WE'VE GOT YOU!
DROP THOSE PLANS!

I SEE THAT I HAVE VISITORS! LET ME PUT THIS PAPER AWAY BEFORE I JOIN IN FUN AND GAMES WITH YOU!

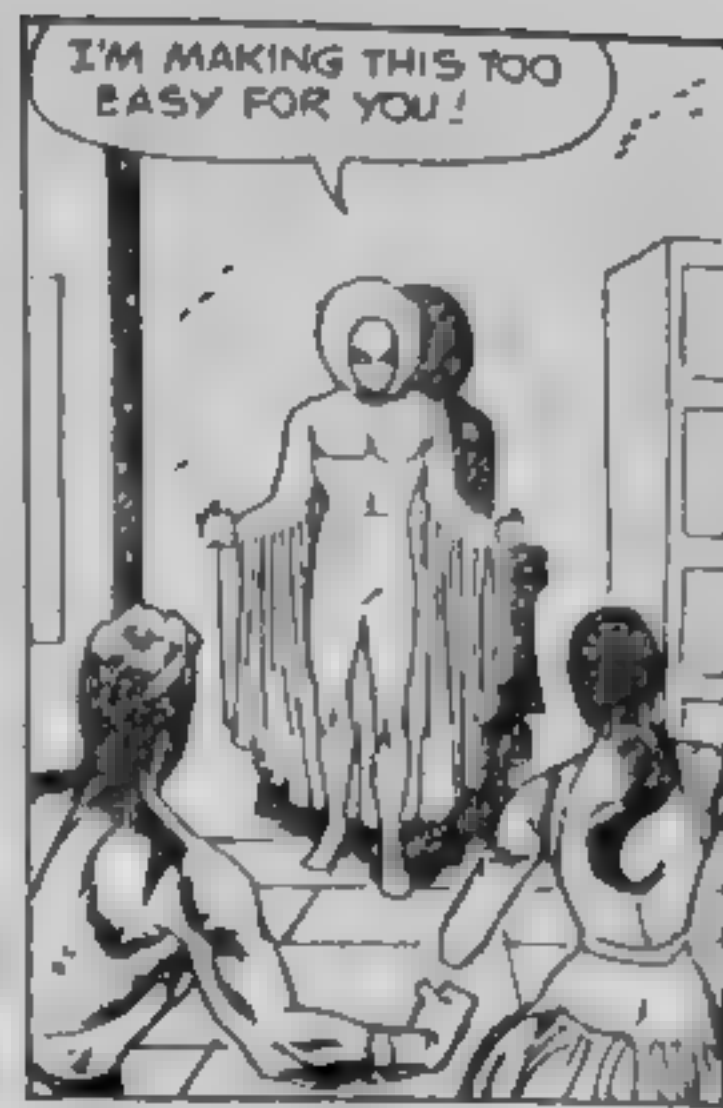
TO BORROW A PHRASE FROM THE BEETLES, "CATCH ME IF YOU CAN"!


WHAT'S THE MATTER, CAPTAIN ATOM? LOST YOUR GRIP?

YOUR TURN, NIGHTSHADE! YOU MIGHT BE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN YOU WERE EARLIER TONIGHT!

NOW I'VE GOT YOU!
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT A BEAUTIFUL LADY, BUT YOU MIGHT SAY THIS GHOST IS FLIGHTY!

SO YOU WANT TO TRY AGAIN! DON'T SAY THE GHOST NEVER GAVE YOU A CHANCE! HA, HA, HA!


I'M MAKING THIS TOO EASY FOR YOU!

MAYBE A FEW OBSTACLES WILL HELP MAKE THE CHASE MORE EXCITING!
WHA...!

I GUESS HE GOT TIRED OF PLAYING GAMES!
LET'S FIND OUT WHAT HE TOOK!

NO NEED TO BOTHER, FRIENDS! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I TOOK BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO STOP ME!

I'M GOING TO DO WHAT GOLDFINGER FAILED TO DO! I'M GOING TO STEAL THE GOLD IN FORT KNOX! HA, HA!

WHOEVER HE IS, HE'S A SPORTING GUY! HE REALLY FIGURES THAT THE ODDS ARE ALL IN HIS FAVOR BECAUSE OF HIS POWERS!
AFTER THIS FIASCO TONIGHT, I'D SAY THAT THEY WERE, SO LET'S GO BACK TO THE PARTY AND SEE IF ANYTHING ELSE HAPPENS!

I'LL CHANGE AND WE'LL GO BACK TO NOIS' HOUSE TOGETHER!
IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF WE KNEW WHAT EACH OTHER LOOKED LIKE IF ANY ACTION GETS STARTED!

AND SO, AFTER LEAVING NIGHTSHADE, CAPTAIN ATOM CHANGED AND WAITED UNTIL...
SO THAT'S CAPTAIN ATOM UNMASKED! HMMM... HANDSOME!
OH, NO! SHE CAN'T BE NIGHTSHADE!

EVE EDEN! YOU... YOU'RE NOT... NOT...
I GUESS I'M ONE OF THE LAST WOMEN ANYONE WOULD SUSPECT OF BEING NIGHTSHADE... LEAST I HOPE SO!

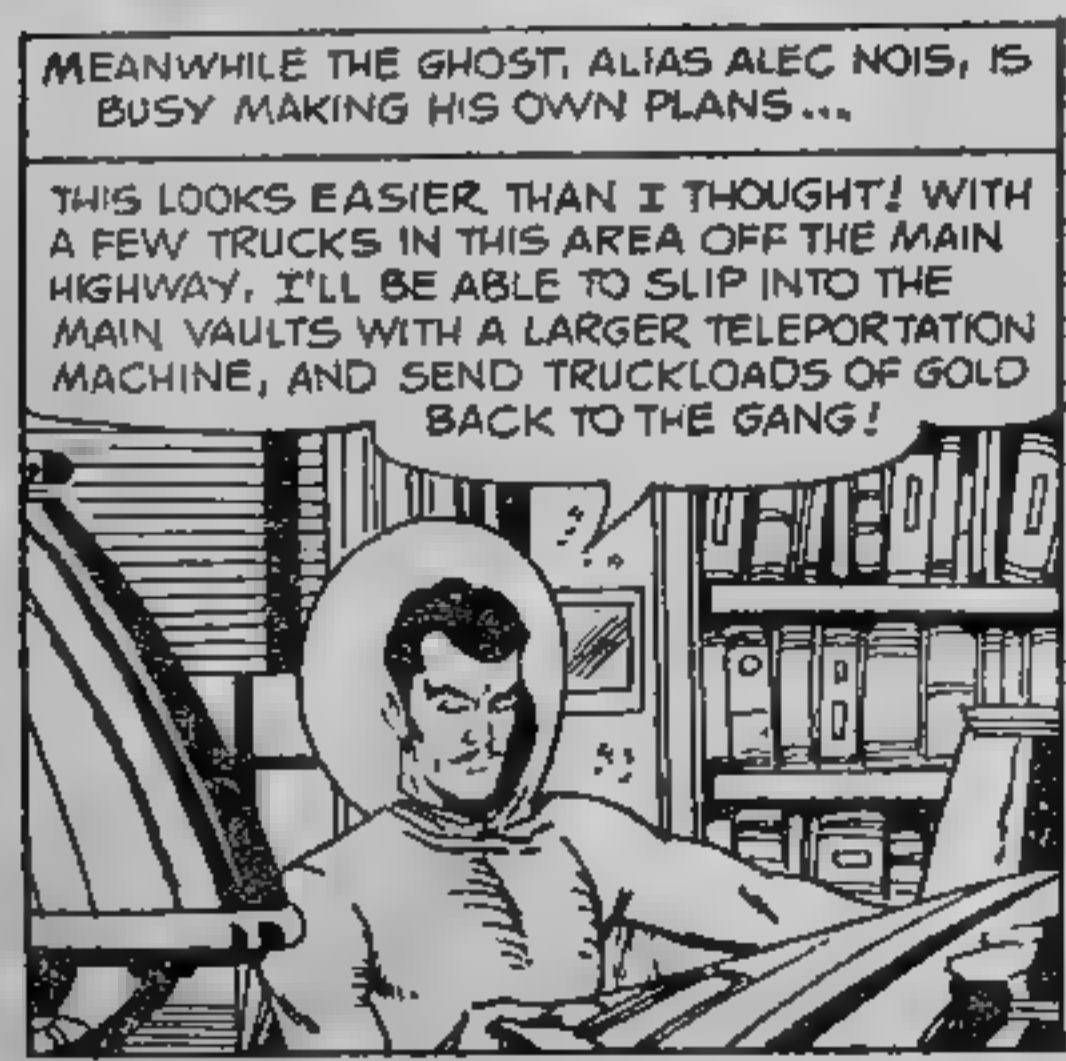
AND YOU, WHAT'S YOUR EVERY DAY IDENTITY?
CAPTAIN ADAM; U.S.A.F.! WHY DO YOU DO IT, EVE? WHAT MAKES YOU RISK EVERYTHING POSING AS NIGHTSHADE?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU JUST DO IT FOR KICKS!
I... I CAN'T TELL YOU... NOT YET... SOMEDAY...
OKAY, EVE. I WON'T PRESS IT!

WE BETTER GET BACK TO THE PARTY AND OUR JOB! I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND THE ADDED TASK OF MIXING A LITTLE PLEASURE WITH BUSINESS!
THE GHOST IS REALLY ASKING FOR TROUBLE IF HE TRIES TO PREVENT THAT!

AND SO THE NEXT MORNING, THE PAIR DELIVER THEIR BAD NEWS...
WHAT!! THE GHOST IS GOING TO STEAL GOLD FROM FORT KNOX ?! IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A DETECTIVE STORY!

WHATEVER IT SOUNDS LIKE, WE VE GOT TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING!
IF FOREIGN NATIONS EVER LEARNED ABOUT IT, THERE WOULD BE A WORLD WIDE PANIC!


MEANWHILE THE GHOST, ALIAS ALEC NOIS, IS BUSY MAKING HIS OWN PLANS...
THIS LOOKS EASIER THAN I THOUGHT! WITH A FEW TRUCKS IN THIS AREA OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY, I'LL BE ABLE TO SLIP INTO THE MAIN VAULTS WITH A LARGER TELEPORTATION MACHINE, AND SEND TRUCKLOADS OF GOLD BACK TO THE GANG!

I HOPE THAT THOSE TWO, CAPTAIN ATOM AND NIGHTSHADE SHOW UP THIS TIME! I'LL TELEPORT THEM SO FAR THEY'LL NEVER GET BACK!

IT SHOULDN'T TAKE ME TOO LONG TO ROUND UP A CREW AND GET THE BIGGER TELEPORTATION MACHINE IN OPERATING ORDER!

I'VE GOT A POWER IN MY HANDS, NO ONE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO STOP! ONCE I HAVE THE GOLD, I'LL BE ABLE TO BUY ANYONE OR ANYTHING! HA, HA!

BUT PLANS ARE BEING MADE BY THE OTHER SIDE...
I'LL FEEL BETTER ONCE WE ARE IN FORT KNOX! THE WAITING FOR THE GHOST TO ACT WILL KILL ME!
I COULD HAVE GOTTEN US TO FORT KNOX MUCH QUICKER BY FLYING US THERE!

BUT AS THE MAJOR SAID, THE SIGHT OF US FLYING INTO AND OVER FORT KNOX WOULD ATTRACT ATTENTION! REPORTERS WOULD GET SUSPICIOUS IF THEY KNEW WE WERE THERE!

HE'S RIGHT THERE! AND THIS WAY I GET A CHANCE TO RELAX AND ENJOY THE SCENERY FOR A CHANCE!

THAT'S ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE TRUCKS THAT GOT IN MY WAY! I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY OF THEM ON THIS ROAD BEFORE IN MY LIFE!
WHAT? YOU MEAN THE TRAFFIC ISN'T LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME?

YOU THINK THAT IT'S PART OF THE GHOST'S PLAN?
EXACTLY! IF YOU SPEED THIS THING UP, WE'LL PASS THAT TRUCK AND GET INTO FORT KNOX AHEAD OF THEM!

I'LL SHOW YOU SPEED THEN! I WOULDN'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON BEING PART OF A WELCOMING COMMITTEE FOR THE GHOST AND HIS CREW!
AND I WANT TO SET UP ANOTHER PLAN OF OPERATION TO CAPTURE THE GHOST HIMSELF! I WANT TO SEE HOW HE LIKES BEING SPOOKED!

ONCE WE REGISTER AT THE HOTEL, WE CAN SLIP OUT TO GET TO THE BASE!
WE'LL HAVE TO GET INTO UNIFORM AND SOON! THE GHOST ISN'T GOING TO GIVE US ANOTHER CHANCE TO CAPTURE HIM AFTER TODAY!

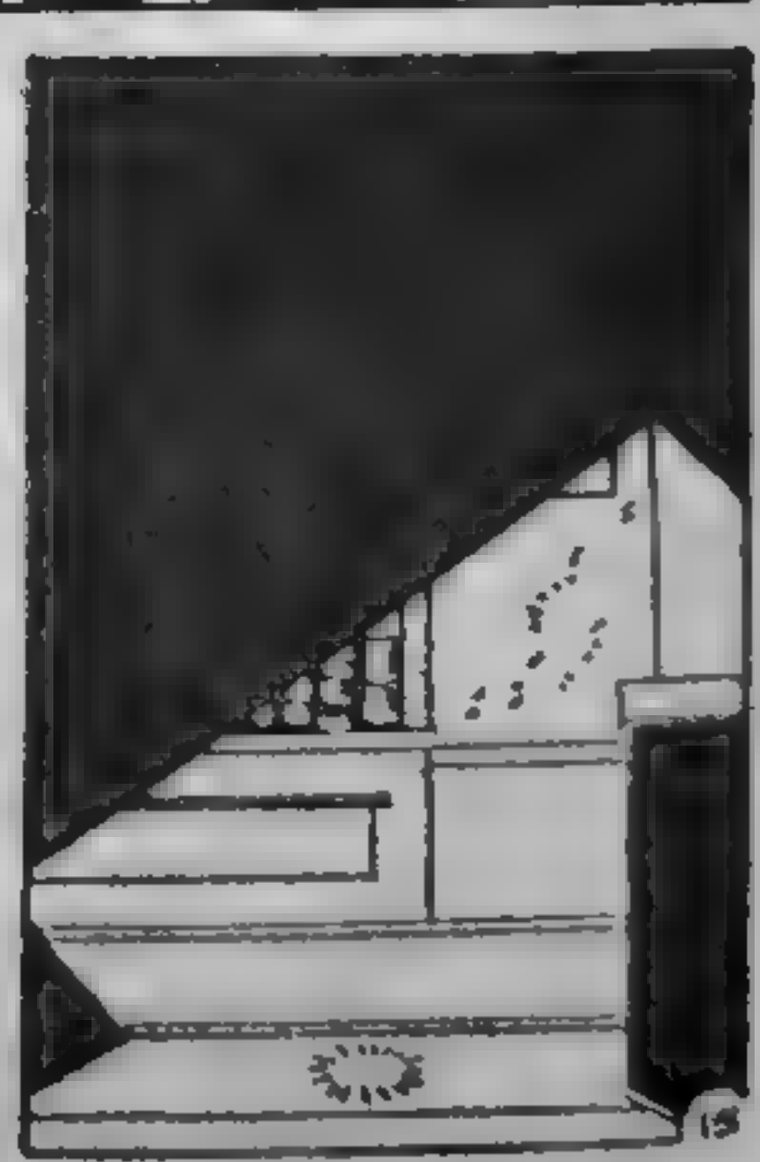
AND WHAT ABOUT THE GHOST? WHAT'S HE DOING RIGHT NOW?
I'M NOT GIVING THEM MUCH TIME TO PREPARE A TRAP FOR ME. THE SOONER I GET THIS GOLDEN GHOST OPERATION OVER WITH, THE BETTER I'LL FEEL!

A MESSAGE FOR THE SPIRIT WORLD! MOST OF THE TRUCKS ARE ON THE WAY AND SHOULD REACH THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY IN AN HOUR!
GOOD! THEN ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TELEPORT MYSELF THERE AND START MOVING THE GOLD OUT WITH MY MACHINE!

I MAY JUST STICK AROUND TO SEE THE EXPRESSION ON THE GUARD'S FACE WHEN HE DISCOVERS THE GOLD GONE! HE'S GOING TO LOOK SO SHOCKED!

TO PARAPHRASE LINCOLN, THE WORLD WILL LONG REMEMBER WHAT I DO TODAY!

BUT I DON'T THINK THAT IT WILL LIKE IT!



FORT KNOX NEVER SEEMED AS BUSY BEFORE! HIGH IN THE AIR, HELICOPTERS WERE CIRCLING THE AREA OF THE BUILDING AND WATCHING THE TRUCKS ASSEMBLE IN A WOODED AREA NEARBY.

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, THEN ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TAKE THOSE TRUCKS AND STOP THEM!

BUT WE STILL WOULDN'T HAVE THE GHOST AND HE WOULD BE BACK TO TRY AGAIN!

AND THE THING WE WANT THE MOST IS TO GET THE GHOST!

I GUESS WE DIDN'T GET HERE A MINUTE TOO SOON! THERE'S THE GHOST NOW!

ONCE HE DISAPPEARS, YOU CAN START YOUR ATTACK ON THE TRUCKS!

THE SPIRIT WORLD WILL BE MUCH RICHER AFTER TODAY! SINCE YOU'RE ALL IN THE PROPER FORMATION, I'LL GET INSIDE THE BUILDING AND START SENDING THE GOLD OUT TO YOU!

THAT MAN IN WHITE HAS DISAPPEARED!

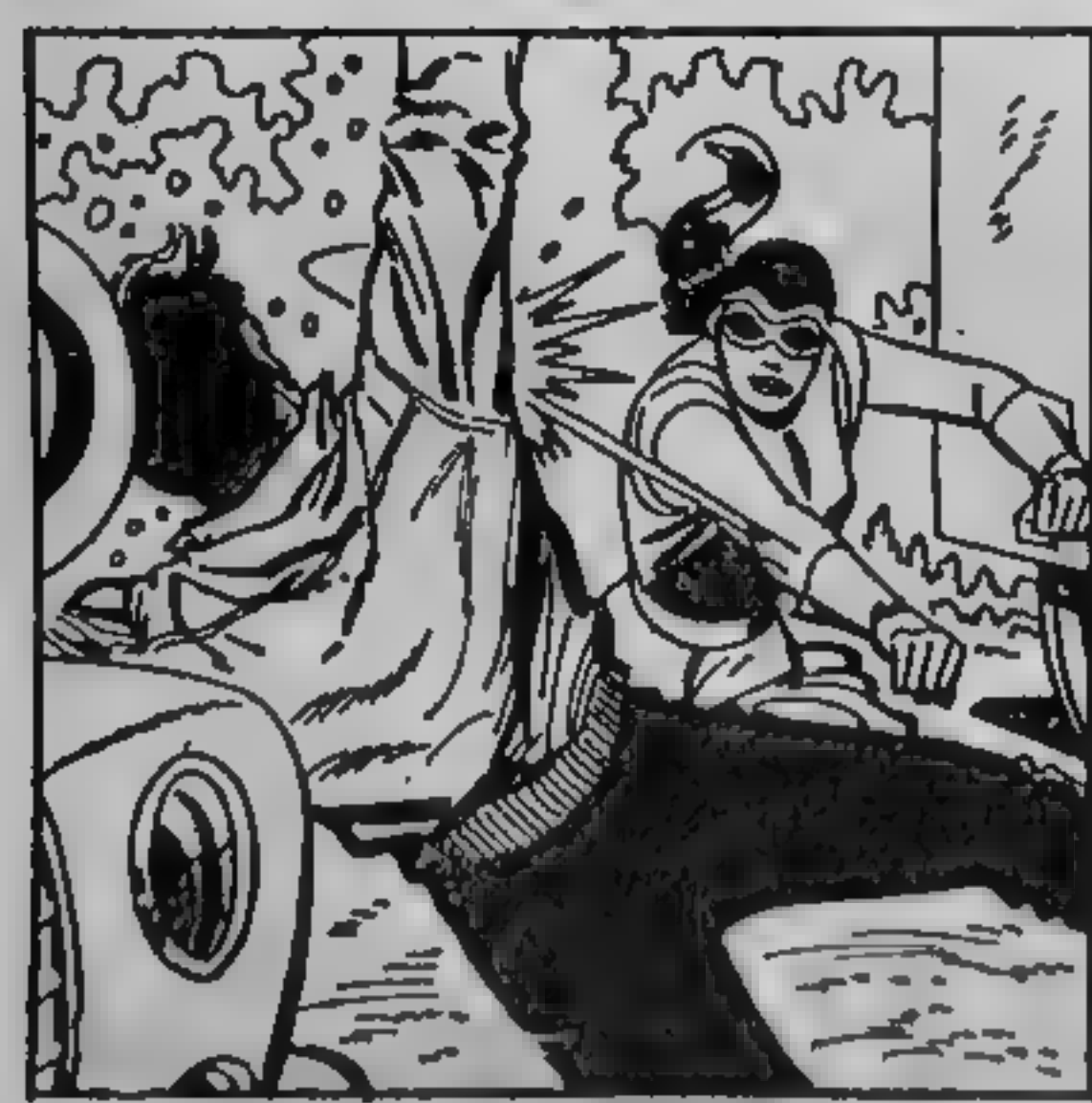
WHICH MEANS YOU CAN RADIO YOUR MEN TO SURROUND THE TRUCKS! THEN WE'LL DESCEND AND CAPTURE THEM!

MEANWHILE I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT TO KEEP WITH THE GHOST! I WANT TO SEE HOW HE LIKES BEING SCARED BY A "GHOST"!

MAIN FLOOR -- CROOKS, GUNS AND GETAWAY TRUCKS! EVERYBODY OUT!

DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S IMPOLITE TO POINT... ESPECIALLY GUNS!

YOU CROOKS ARE ALL SO UNMANNERLY! YOU SHOULDN'T SNEAK UP ON A LADY LIKE THAT!



YOU BOYS ARRIVED TOO EARLY! I WAS JUST BEGINNING TO ENJOY MYSELF!
WITH THE PARTY OVER OUT HERE, I'D LIKE TO BE INSIDE WITH CAPTAIN ATOM RIGHT NOW!

AND JUST HOW DID CAPTA N ATOM PLAN TO SCARE THE GHOST? WELL, LET'S SEE...

I'LL BE THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD ONCE I VE GOT THIS GOLD TO MY HIDEOUT! TOO BAD MY MACHINE ISN'T POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TELEPORT ALL OF THE GOLD DIRECTLY TO THE HIDEOUT! THEN I WOULDN'T NEED THE TRUCKS!

I'M AFRAID THAT YOUR PLANS ARE ALL GOING TO BE SPOILED!

I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU NIGHTMARES, MR. GHOST!

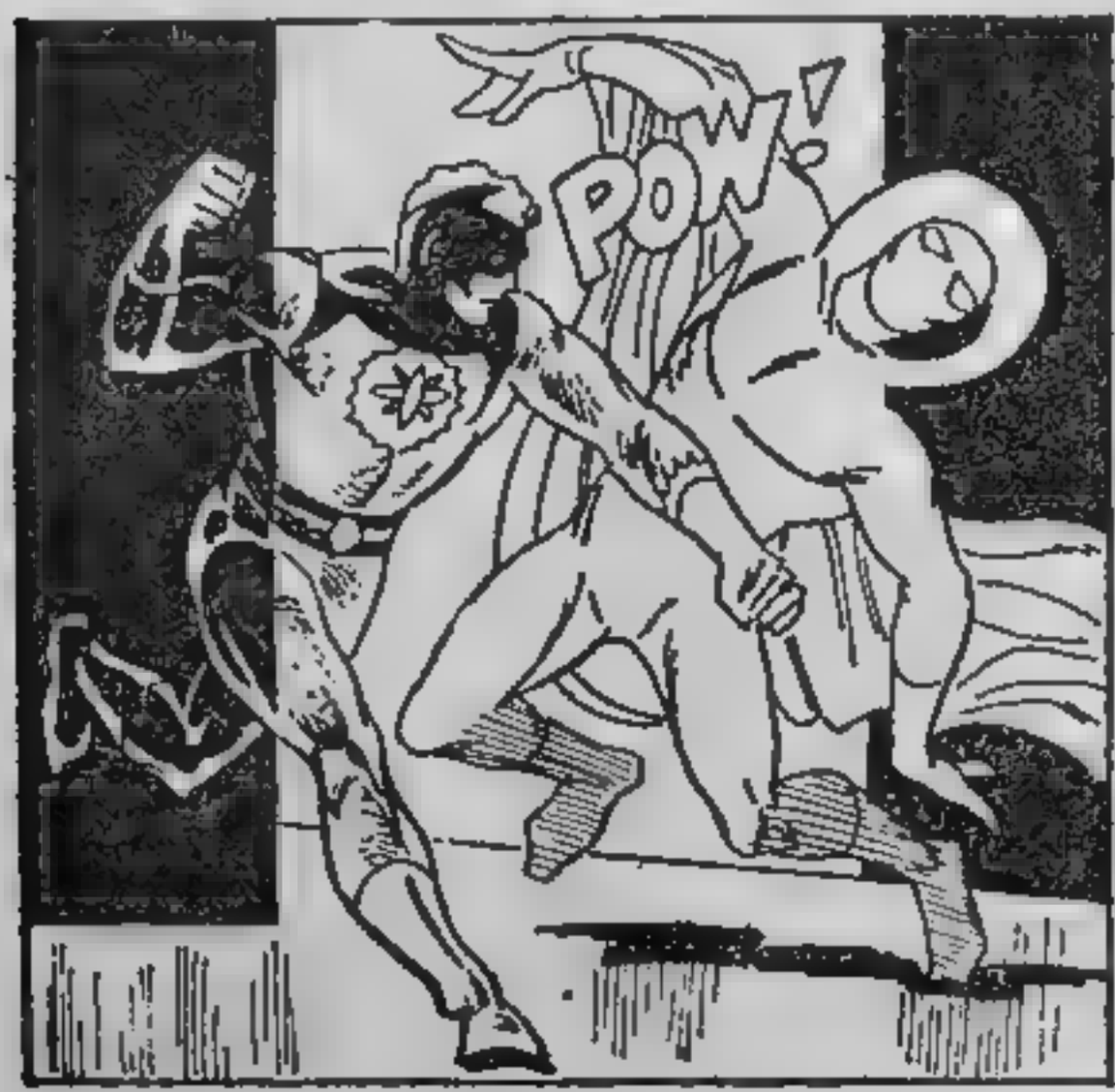
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY MACHINE? IT'S ALMOST AS IF SOMEONE SNATCHED IT FROM MY HANDS!

SOMEONE DID, GHOST! LITTLE OLD INVISIBLE MAN ME!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? CAN THE ARMY HAVE A MACHINE, THAT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT, BE DOING THIS?

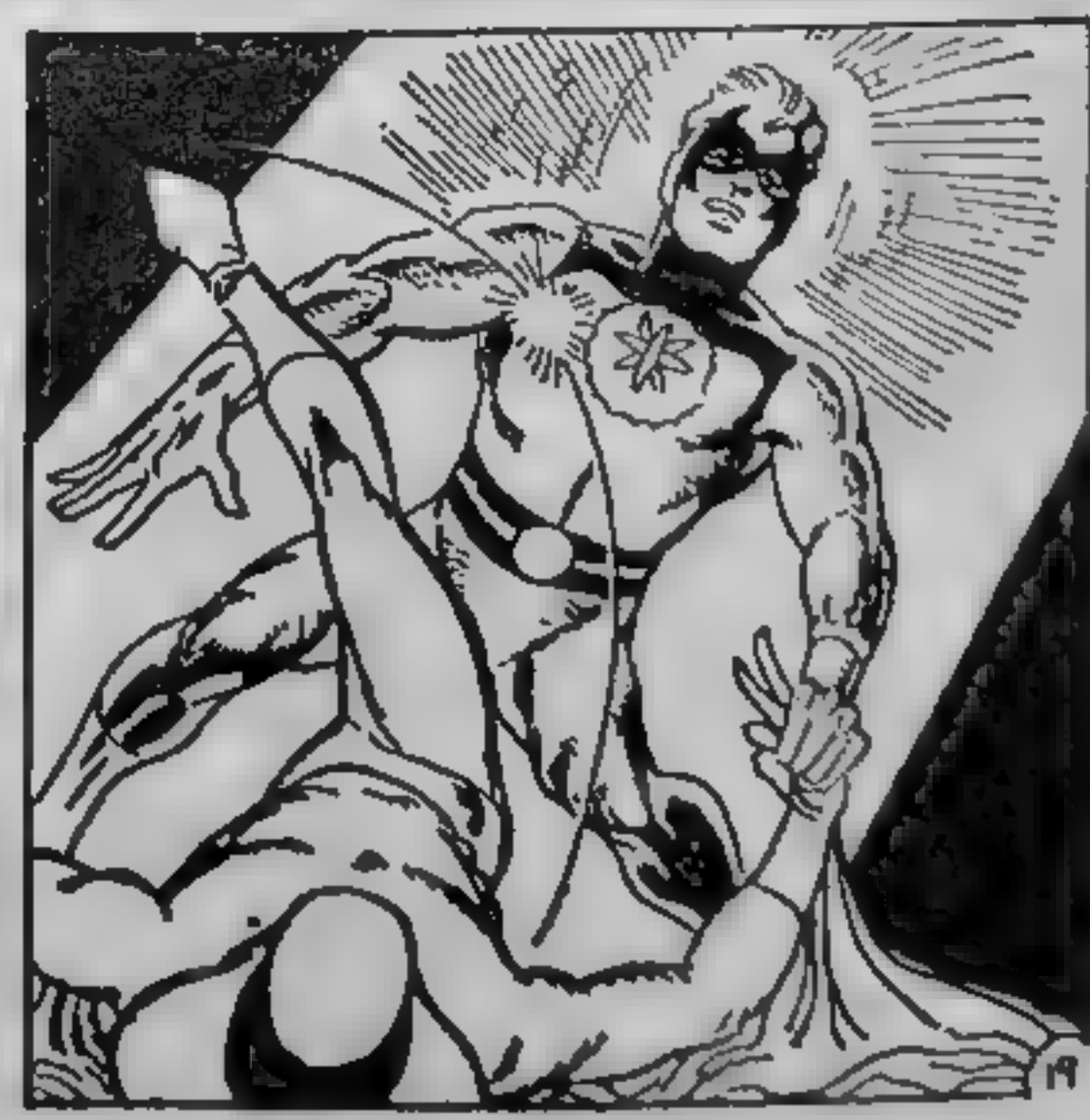
TO FIGHT A GHOST, THE ARMY INVENTED SOMETHING JUST AS SCAREY! GHOST, MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN!
WHAT?! THAT VOICE SOUNDS LIKE CAPTAIN ATOM!

I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE YOU, CAPTAIN ATOM, BUT I CAN STILL SEE MY MACHINE AND TELEPORT IT OUT TO WHERE YOU'LL NEVER FIND IT!
I'VE GOT TO GET HIM NOW BEFORE HE TRIES TO GET AWAY!

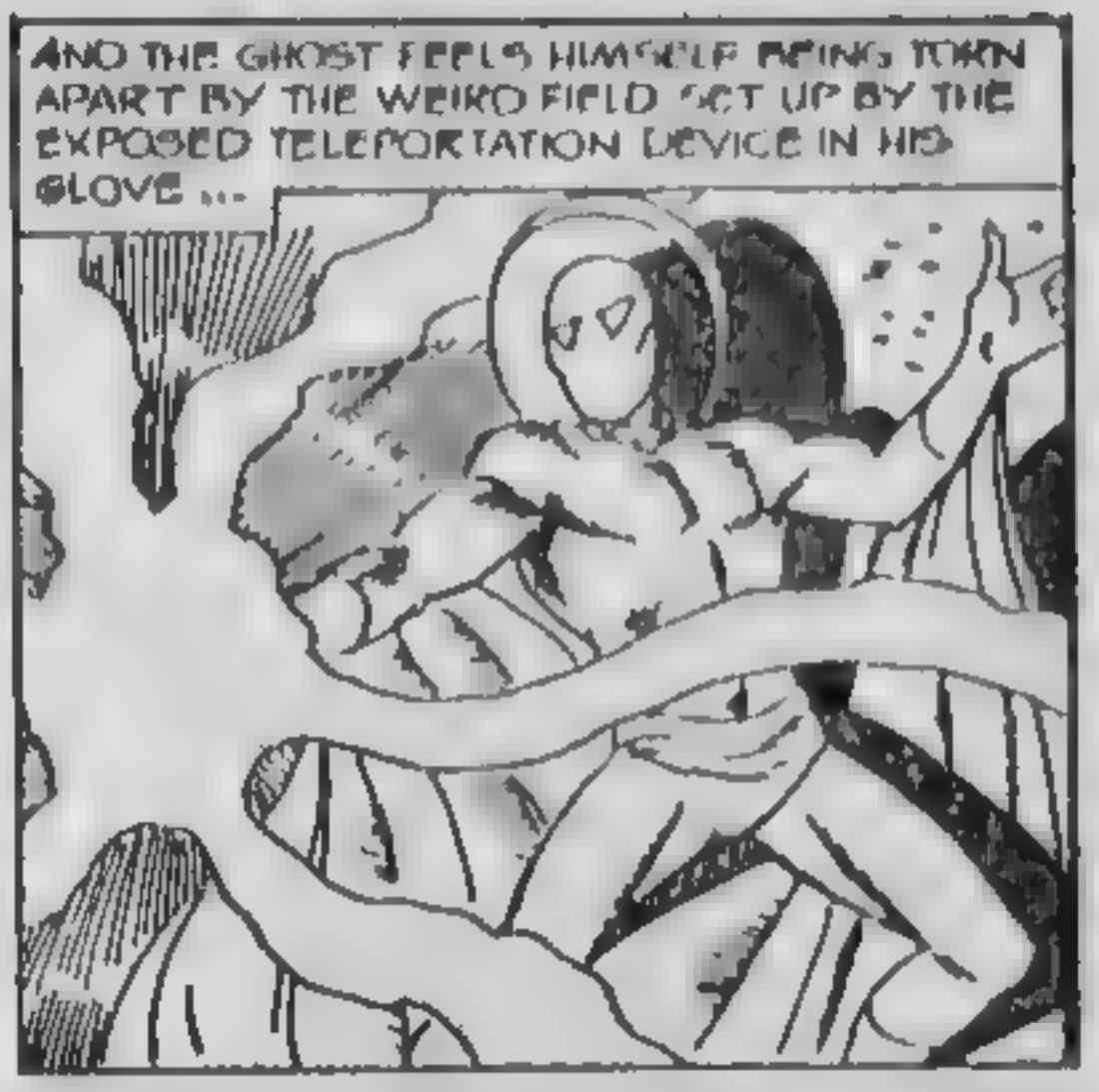

POW!

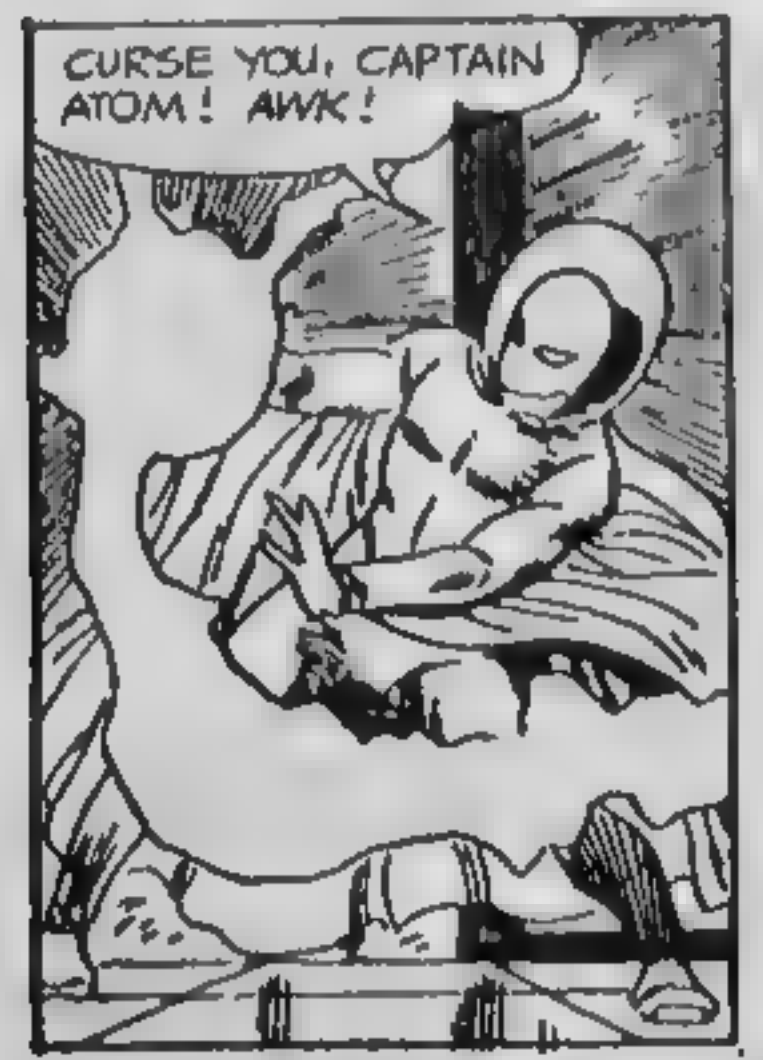
I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE PULLING ANY MORE DISAPPEARING ACTS ONCE I GET THESE GLOVES OFF YOU!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, MY INVISIBLE FRIEND!

SUDDENLY, THE GHOST MAKES HIS MOVE AND TRIES TO BREAK AWAY...
NOW THAT I CAN SEE YOU, I'LL MAKE MY BREAK!
WHAT?! I THOUGHT I HIT YOU HARD ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU ASLEEP FOR HOURS!

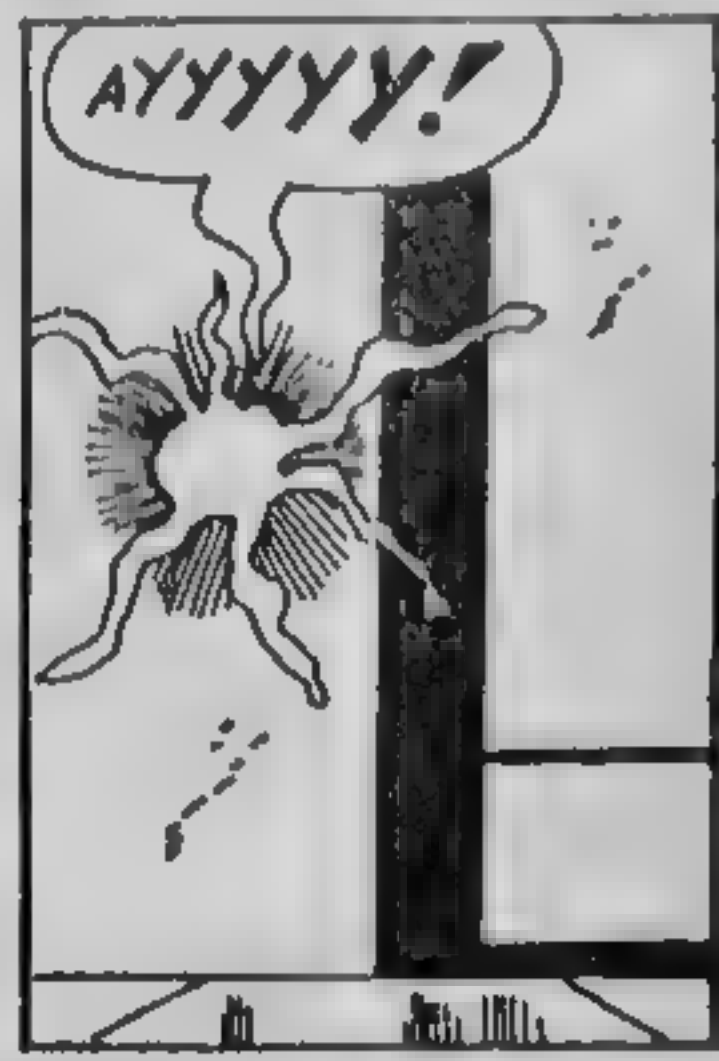


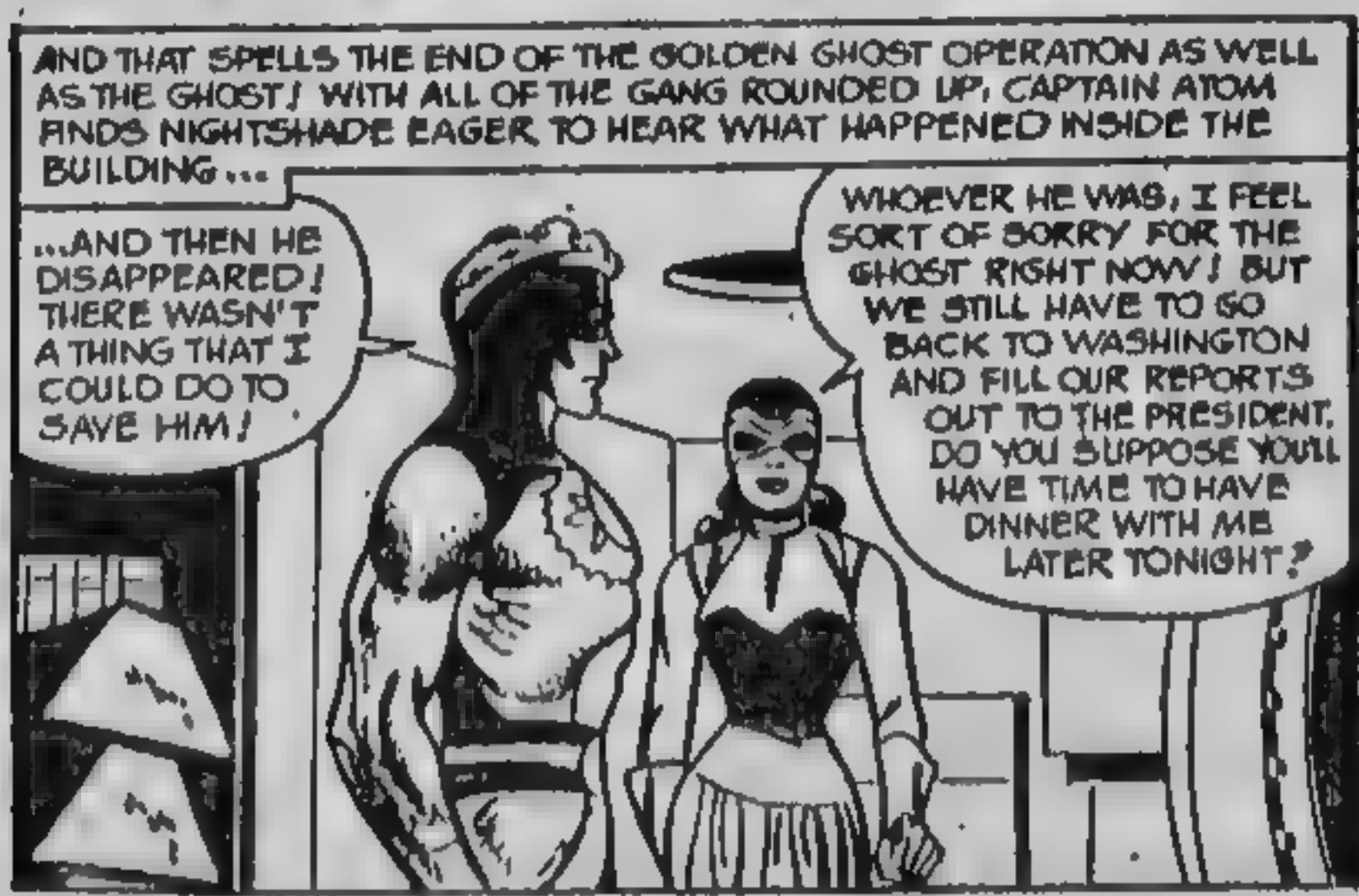
BUT IN HIS HASTE, THE GHOST FEELS HIS GLOVE AND THE WIRES IN IT TEARING APART IN THE STRONG GRIP OF CAPTAIN ATOM...
MY GLOVE! HE'S GOT TO LET GO OF MY GLOVE!


AND THE GHOST FEELS HIMSELF BEING TORN APART BY THE WEIRD FIELD SET UP BY THE EXPOSED TELEPORTATION DEVICE IN HIS GLOVE ...


CURSE YOU, CAPTAIN ATOM! AWK!

AYYYE!


AYYYYY!


AND THAT SPELLS THE END OF THE GOLDEN GHOST OPERATION AS WELL AS THE GHOST! WITH ALL OF THE GANG ROUNDED UP, CAPTAIN ATOM FINDS NIGHTSHADE EAGER TO HEAR WHAT HAPPENED INSIDE THE BUILDING...
...AND THEN HE DISAPPEARED! THERE WASN'T A THING THAT I COULD DO TO SAVE HIM!
WHOEVER HE WAS, I FEEL SORT OF SORRY FOR THE GHOST RIGHT NOW! BUT WE STILL HAVE TO GO BACK TO WASHINGTON AND FILL OUR REPORTS OUT TO THE PRESIDENT. DO YOU SUPPOSE YOU'LL HAVE TIME TO HAVE DINNER WITH ME LATER TONIGHT?

THE END

THE IRON GIANT!

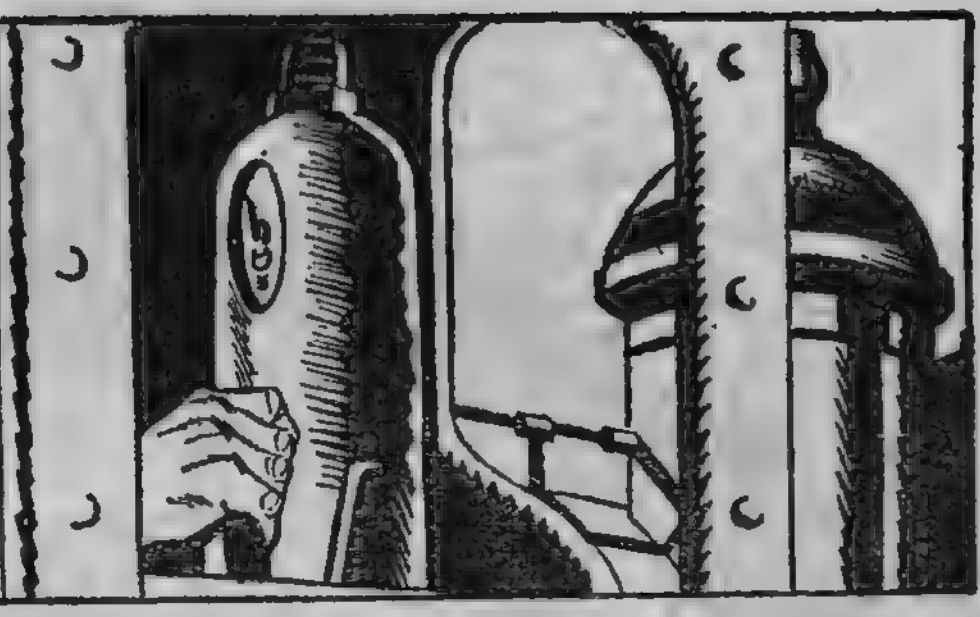
THE FORCES OF DARKNESS HAVE NO BOUNDARIES! STRANGE MYSTERIES AND GRIM ADVENTURES CAN HAPPEN **ANYWHERE**, AT ANY TIME! THIS INCREDIBLE TALE IS SAID TO HAVE HAPPENED IN THE OLD WEST, DURING THE 1880'S!

I DON'T MIND THESE NIGHT RUNS, ANNIE! SO LONG AS I CAN HEAR YOU CHUGGING AND ROARING, I KNOW I'M NOT ALONE!

BEN PERKINS WAS HIS NAME! BUT EVERYONE CALLED HIM "LONELY BEN", BECAUSE HIS ONLY FRIEND WAS THE IRON LOCOMOTIVE HE RODE FROM ONE ISOLATED TOWN TO ANOTHER! THE IRON GIANT HE CALLED "ANNIE"!

PAUL REINMAN V-50

YESSIR, YOU'RE MY FRIEND, ANNIE, AND I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU! NEVER!



WE MADE IT!!!
MOVE, YOU JASPERS!

OKAY, MISTUH-- STOP THIS TRAIN!
W-WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT??

AH SAID STOP THE TRAIN! AN' IF AH HAFTA SAY IT AGAIN, MUH GUN'LL DO THE TALKIN'!
ALL RIGHT, MISTER! I'M STOPPIN'!

THAT'S BETTER!
C'MON, BOYS! EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL!
SCREECH!

THERE'S THE STRONG BOX!
STAND BACK!
BANG!

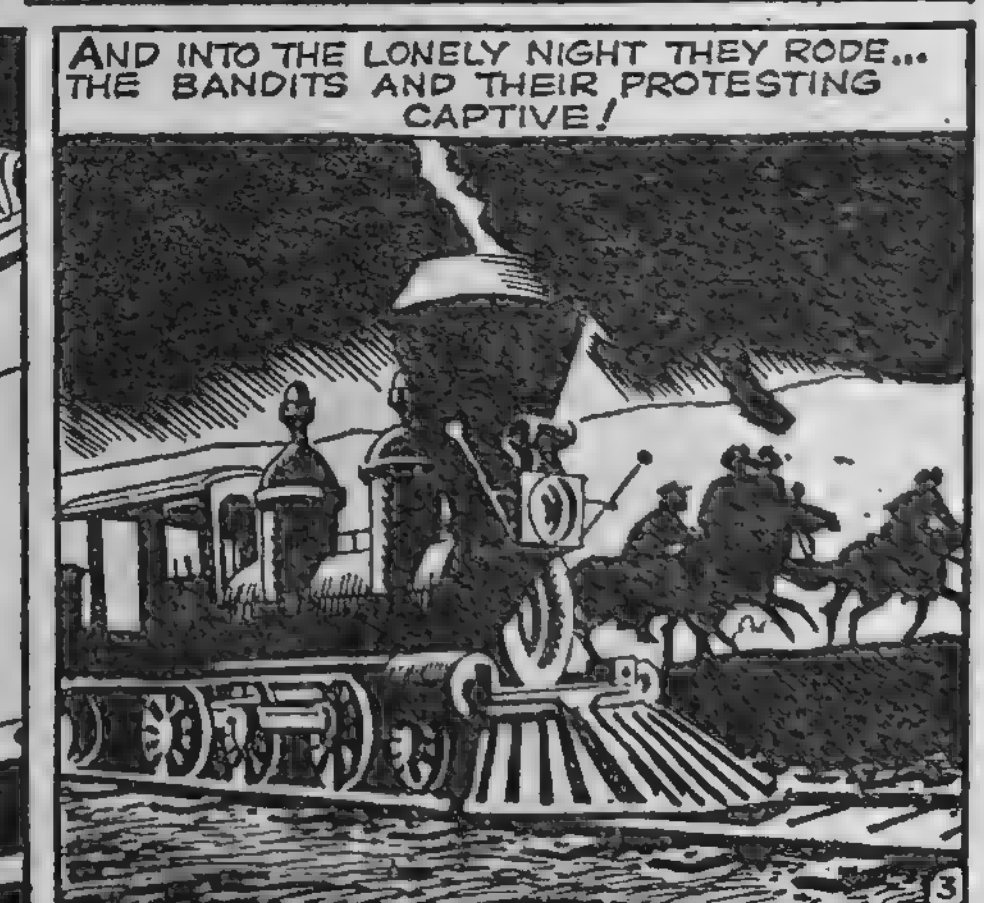
LOOKA ALL THAT BEA-U-TIFUL MONEY!
WE DONE STRUCK PAY DIRT THIS TIME! YIPPEE!
STOP THAT! STOP IT!
BANG!
BANG!

HEY, YOU YELLIN' AT US, MISTUH?
YES, I AM! YOU GOT NO CALL TO SHOOT OFF YOUR GUNS IN HERE! YOU MIGHT HURT OLD ANNIE!
OLD ANNIE?
HE MUST MEAN THE LOCOMOTIVE!

HA! HA! THE HOMBRE'S LOCO!
HE DON'T LIKE US SHOOTIN' UP HIS TRAIN! NOW AIN'T THAT TOO BAD!
YEH, IT'S REAL AWFUL! HA! HA! HA!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!

WITH TEARS STREAMING DOWN HIS FACE, THE HELPLESS OLD MAN BEGGED THE OUTLAWS TO STOP FIRING AT HIS BELOVED ENGINE, BUT THE GUNMEN KEPT RIGHT ON SHOOTING UNTIL THEY HAD HAD THEIR FILL!
ANNIE--ANNIE--WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU??!
SAY, I GOT AN IDEA! LET'S TAKE THAT OL' FOOL WITH US! THEN HE WON'T BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE US TO THE POSSE!

GOOD IDEA! IT'LL TEACH HIM NOT T'GO AROUND TALKIN' TO LOCOMOTIVES!
STOP! LET ME GO!! PUT ME DOWN!
HA! HA! LISSEN TO HIM HOLLER!


AND INTO THE LONELY NIGHT THEY RODE... THE BANDITS AND THEIR PROTESTING CAPTIVE!

WHEN THEY HAD GONE A GOOD DISTANCE, THE RUTHLESS OUTLAWS RELEASED BEN PERKINS!
B-BUT YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE ME HERE ALONE, WITHOUT A WEAPON! IF THE INDIANS DON'T GET ME, THE WOLVES WILL!
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE COUNTIN' ON, GRAMPS! YOU SEE, WE FIGGER DEAD MEN DON'T TELL NO TALES!
S'LONG, OLD MAN! NICE KNOWIN' YUH! HA! HA!

BUT AT THAT MOMENT, THE SILENT NIGHT WAS SHATTERED BY A SUDDEN, SHRILL PIERCING SOUND!
T-THAT NOISE! IT SOUNDS LIKE--
LOOK WHAT'S COMIN'!
IT CAIN'T BE!! IT CAIN'T!

BEHIND AN OMINOUS SHADOW, THE HUGE GLEAMING FORM THUNDERED OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE, AN IRON AVENGER, BREATHING BLACK SMOKE!
N-NEAIEE
N-NEAI
HALP!

TOSSED BY THEIR BOLTING HORSES, THE FEARFUL OUTLAWS COULD ONLY FLEE ON FOOT AS THE GREAT GLEAMING MACHINE ROARED DOWN UPON THEM!
OUTTA MUH WAY!
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!

SMASHING WOOD SCATTERING ROCK, THE METAL GIANT DESTROYED EVERYTHING THAT STOOD BETWEEN IT AND ITS PREY!
IT'S STILL CHASING US!
NOTHING CAN STOP IT!!

THE PANICKED BANDITS RUSHED UP HILLS, STAGGERED DOWN GULLIES, AND SPLASHED ACROSS STREAMS, IN THEIR FRANTIC FUTILE EFFORT TO ESCAPE THE IRON, SMOKE-BREATHING DEMON!
HURRY! IT'S CATCHING UP TO US!
HALP-- SOMEBODY-- HALP!

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, THE MONSTROUS BLACK FORM PURSUED THE FRIGHTENED, FLEEING OUTLAWS!

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, IN A NEARBY SMALL TOWN...
HEY, THE SHERIFF'S CAUGHT THE WHARTON GANG!
HOW'D YUH GET 'EM, SHERIFF ??
FOUND 'EM WANDERING OUTSIDE TOWN! ALL WORN OUT AN' TIRED!
TRAIN-- ALIVE...
TRIED TO KILL US...
SAY, WHUT ARE THEM OWLHOOTS MUMBLIN' ABOUT?

DUNNO-- IT'S SOMETHIN' CRAZY ABOUT A LIVIN' LOCOMOTIVE!!
A WHUT??
A LIVIN' LOCOMOTIVE! BOY, THAT'S A GOOD ONE! HA! HA! HA!

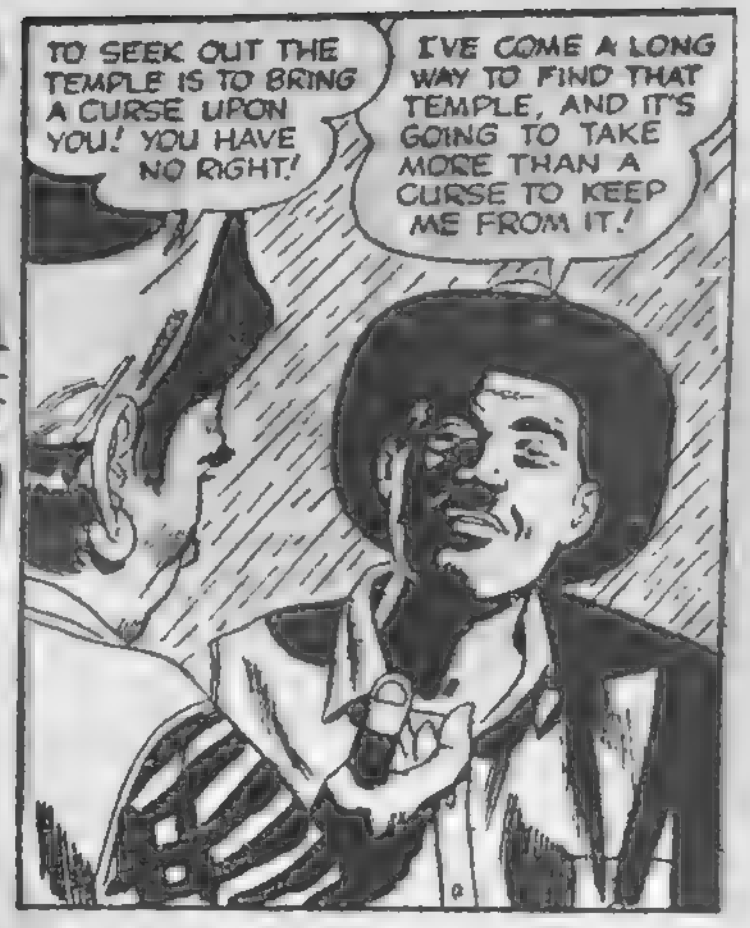
AND SO, LIKE THE NORMAL, PRACTICAL FOLK THEY WERE, THE SHERIFF AND THE TOWNSMEN SCOFFED AT THE TALE OF THE LIVING TRAIN! THE TRUTH WAS TO REMAIN UNKNOWN BY ALL, EXCEPT THE BANDITS AND A HAPPY OLD MAN KNOWN AS "LONELY BEN"!
YESSIR, ANNIE, THEY TRIED TO KEEP US APART, BUT THEY FAILED, THANKS TO YOU! NOW, WE'RE T'GETHER AGAIN AND THAT'S THE WAY IT'LL BE-- FOR ALWAYS!
The End

SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE HIDDEN DEPTHS OF THE TIBETAN MOUNTAINS, WAS THE FABULOUS TEMPLE OF RAHSHINA, TREASURE HOUSE OF THE ANCIENT KINGS! THIS WAS A PRIZE WORTH FIGHTING FOR... A PRIZE DIRK KENYARD HAD CLAIMED FOR HIS OWN!

Lost in the LABYRINTH

I WOULD LIKE TO HIRE A GUIDE AND A SMALL PARTY OF BEARERS! THE GUIDE MUST KNOW THE MOUNTAINS! THE PAY WILL BE VERY GOOD!
WHAT DOES THE SAHIB HUNT... TIGERS, THE GREAT APES?

NEITHER! I SEEK THE TEMPLE OF RAHSHINA!
NO! THAT IS FORBIDDEN!


TO SEEK OUT THE TEMPLE IS TO BRING A CURSE UPON YOU! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!
I'VE COME A LONG WAY TO FIND THAT TEMPLE, AND IT'S GOING TO TAKE MORE THAN A CURSE TO KEEP ME FROM IT!

I'M CONVINCED THAT SOMEONE IN THIS VILLAGE KNOWS WHERE THE TEMPLE IS! I SUGGEST HE STEP FORWARD... BEFORE I LOSE MY TEMPER AND SOMEONE GETS HURT!
N-NO... PLEASE!

BUT THEN A NEW VOICE WAS HEARD... A VOICE RESONANT WITH AUTHORITY...
HOLD! PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPON!
HUH?

WHO ARE YOU?
I AM RAMPUR, AND THESE ARE MY PEOPLE! I HAVE ALSO HEARD YOUR REQUEST... AND YOUR THREAT IF IT WERE DENIED YOU...

I WOULD NOT HAVE MY PEOPLE HURT! YOU WILL BE SHOWN THE WAY TO THE GREAT TEMPLE OF EL RAHSHINA!
NOW YOU'RE TALKING!

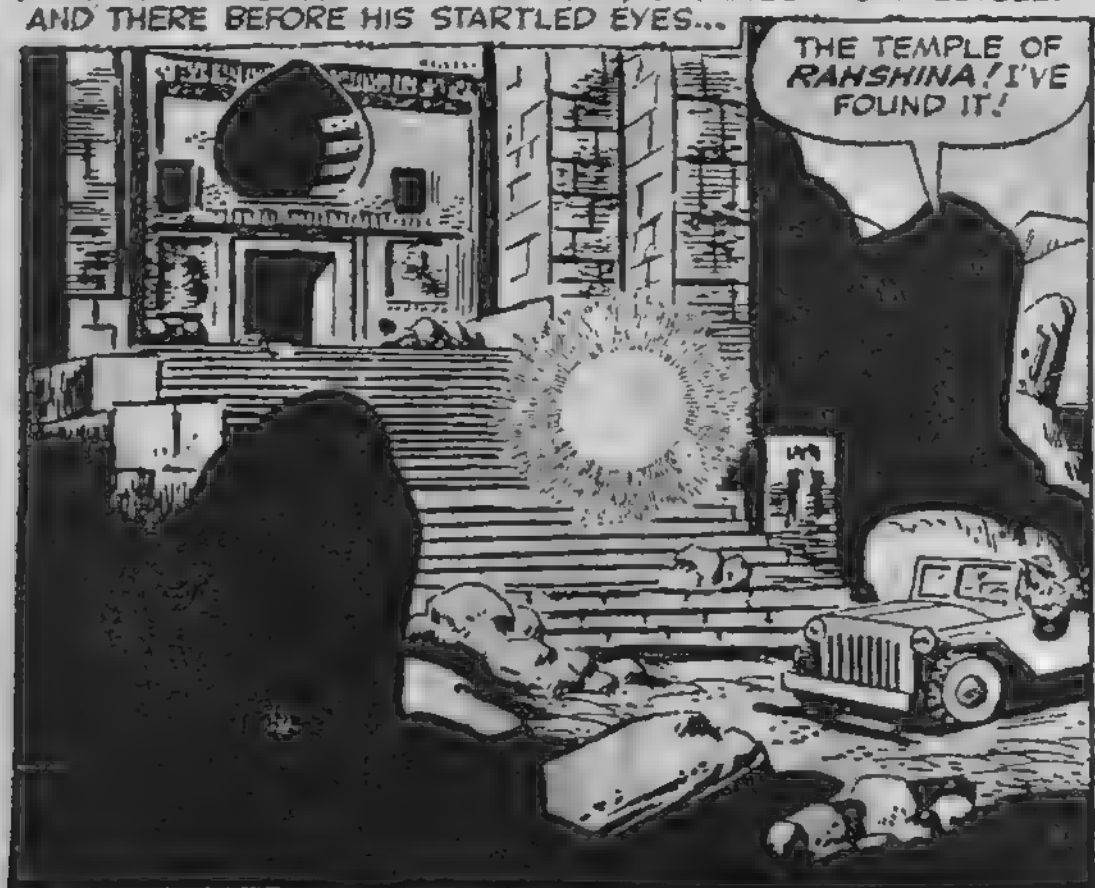
DRAWING THE TIP OF HIS STAFF ACROSS THE SANDY EARTH, THE HOLY MAN WHISPERED STRANGE WORDS...AND THEN BEFORE THE WHITE MAN'S STARTLED EYES...

SLOWLY, IT ROSE INTO THE AIR, CHANGING ITS SHAPE AND FORM UNTIL IT BECAME A GLOWING MASS OF LUMINOUS, PULSATING LIGHT...

WITHOUT HESITATION, HE LEAPED INTO HIS JEEP AND WAS OFF! AHEAD OF HIM STREAKED THE GLOWING BEACON, TWISTING AND TURNING WITHIN THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN...

ON AND ON THEY WENT...DEEPER AND DEEPER WITHIN THE TWISTING LABYRINTH...

AND WHEN HE ROUNDED THE BEND, THE STEEP ROAD LEVELED AND THERE BEFORE HIS STARTLED EYES...

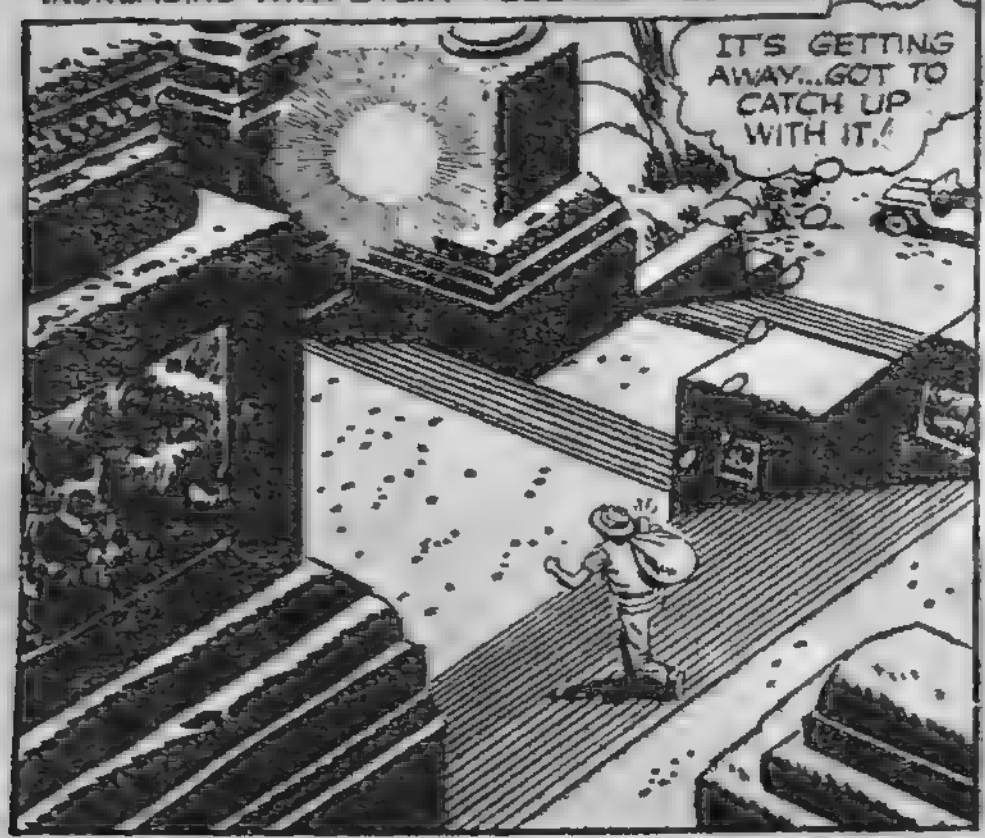


IMPULSIVELY, HE DASHED INSIDE, SUCKING IN HIS BREATH AS HIS EYES FEASTED ON THE GLITTERING SIGHT BEFORE HIM...

I'LL FILL THIS SACK FIRST! THEN GET OTHERS FROM THE JEEP! I'LL TAKE EVERY PIECE I CAN CARRY OUT WITH ME!

BUT SUDDENLY, HE WAS AWARE OF A DRAMATIC CHANGE...
IT'S DARK! THE GLOWING LIGHT! IT'S GONE!

THERE IT IS! IT'S GOING OUT!


BUT THE LIGHT WAS MOVING QUICKLY, ITS SPEED INCREASING WITH EVERY FLEETING SECOND...
IT'S GETTING AWAY...GOT TO CATCH UP WITH IT!

HE FOLLOWED IN HIS JEEP. BUT THEN A MORE STARTLING CHANGE TOOK PLACE! THE GLOWING LIGHT DIMMED, ITS PULSATIONS BECOMING FAINTER AND FAINTER UNTIL...
IT'S GOING OUT! IT C-CANT! IT... NO!

THE NATIVE ELDER'S WORDS CAME BACK TO HIM! IT HAD BEEN PROMISED THAT HE WOULD BE LED TO THE TEMPLE, BUT NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT HIS BEING LED OUT...
I'M OUT OF GAS...I'LL HAVE TO GO ON FOOT! GOT TO FIND MY WAY OUT...

BUT THE PASSING HOURS BROUGHT DIMINISHING HOPE! ALL LANDMARKS BURNED INTO FORGETFULNESS! A SHORT WHILE BEFORE, HIS ONE WISH WAS TO FIND HIS WAY IN, AND NOW ALL WAS REVERSED...
GOT TO FIND MY WAY OUT... GOT TO...BEFORE IT'S...TOO LATE...
THE END

THE WAY OF THE STRANGER'S COMING WAS ASTOUNDING, BUT THE WAY OF HIS GOING WAS TO BE EVEN MORE ASTOUNDING!

"the STRANGER'S suitcase!"

A TALE TO MARVEL AT!

A BLINDING FLASH DYED THE LONELY DESERT A BRILLIANT RED! AND THEN THE STRANGER MATERIALIZED, CARRYING A BULGING SUITCASE...

bill walton

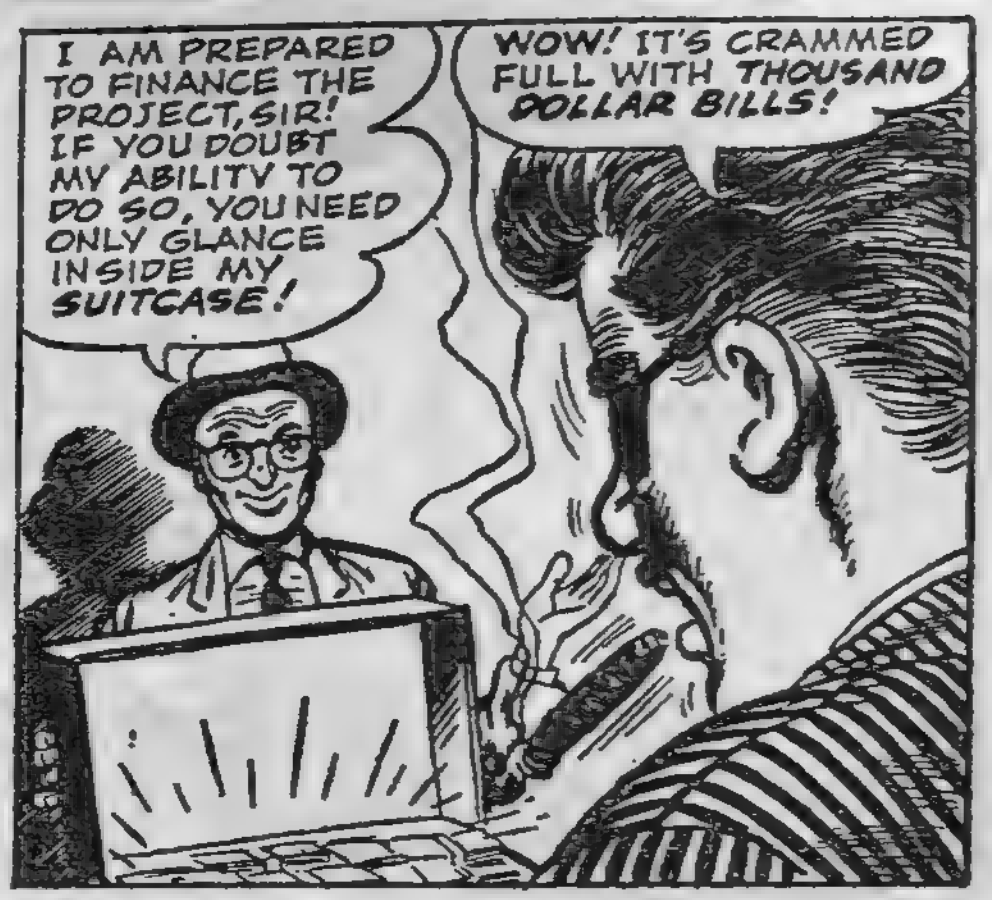
K-220

HE KEPT WALKING UNTIL HE REACHED THE NEAREST CITY! THE SUITCASE WAS STILL BUMPING ALONG AT HIS SIDE...

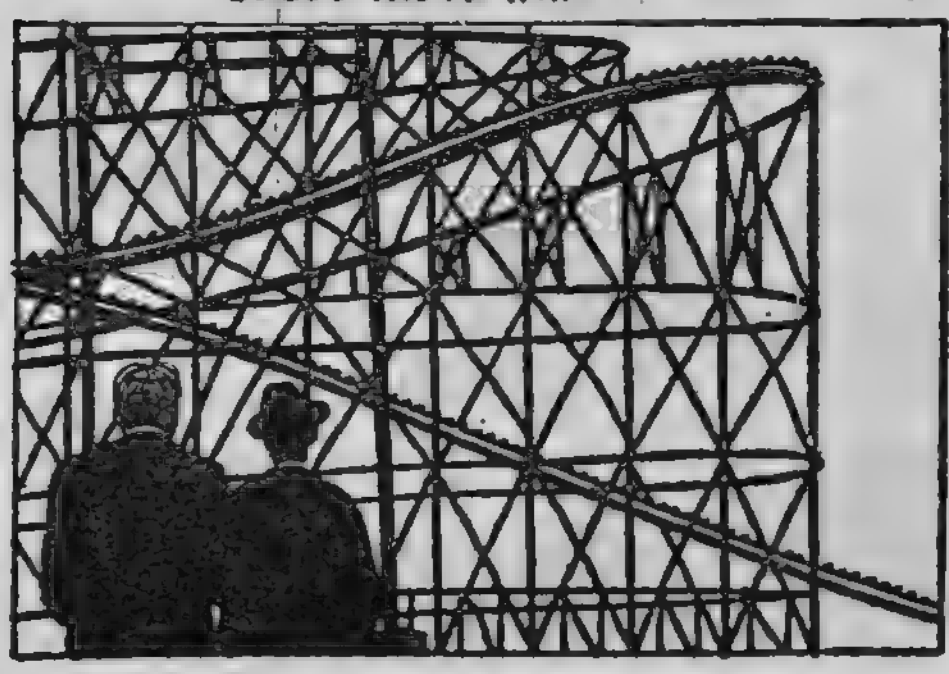
NOW HE WAS CHECKING IN AT THE LOCAL HOTEL! HE HAD JUST GIVEN HIS NAME AS *SMITH*, AND A STRANGE SMILE PLAYED ACROSS HIS FACE IN RESPONSE TO THE CLERK'S QUERY AS TO *WHERE* HE WAS FROM, WHEN SUDDENLY...

HE WAS UP IN HIS ROOM NOW, BUT THE STORY OF THE ANGRY OUTBURST HAD BEGUN TO SPREAD...

IT WAS THE NEXT DAY NOW, AND THE STRANGER HAD COME TO THE LOCAL AMUSEMENT PARK...



AND SO THE MYSTERY OF THE STRANGER AND HIS SUITCASE SEEMED TO BE SOLVED! HE WAS ONE OF THOSE FAST-MOVING PROMOTERS, EVERYBODY FELT, WHO APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE TO SIZE UP A VENTURE AND GET IT UNDER WAY BEFORE COMPETITION COULD MOVE IN...



THE GIGANTIC STRUCTURE WAS FINISHED IN TIME...

AS THE SMALL CAR ROSE SLOWLY, A SMILE WAS PLAYING ACROSS THE STRANGER'S FACE AGAIN...

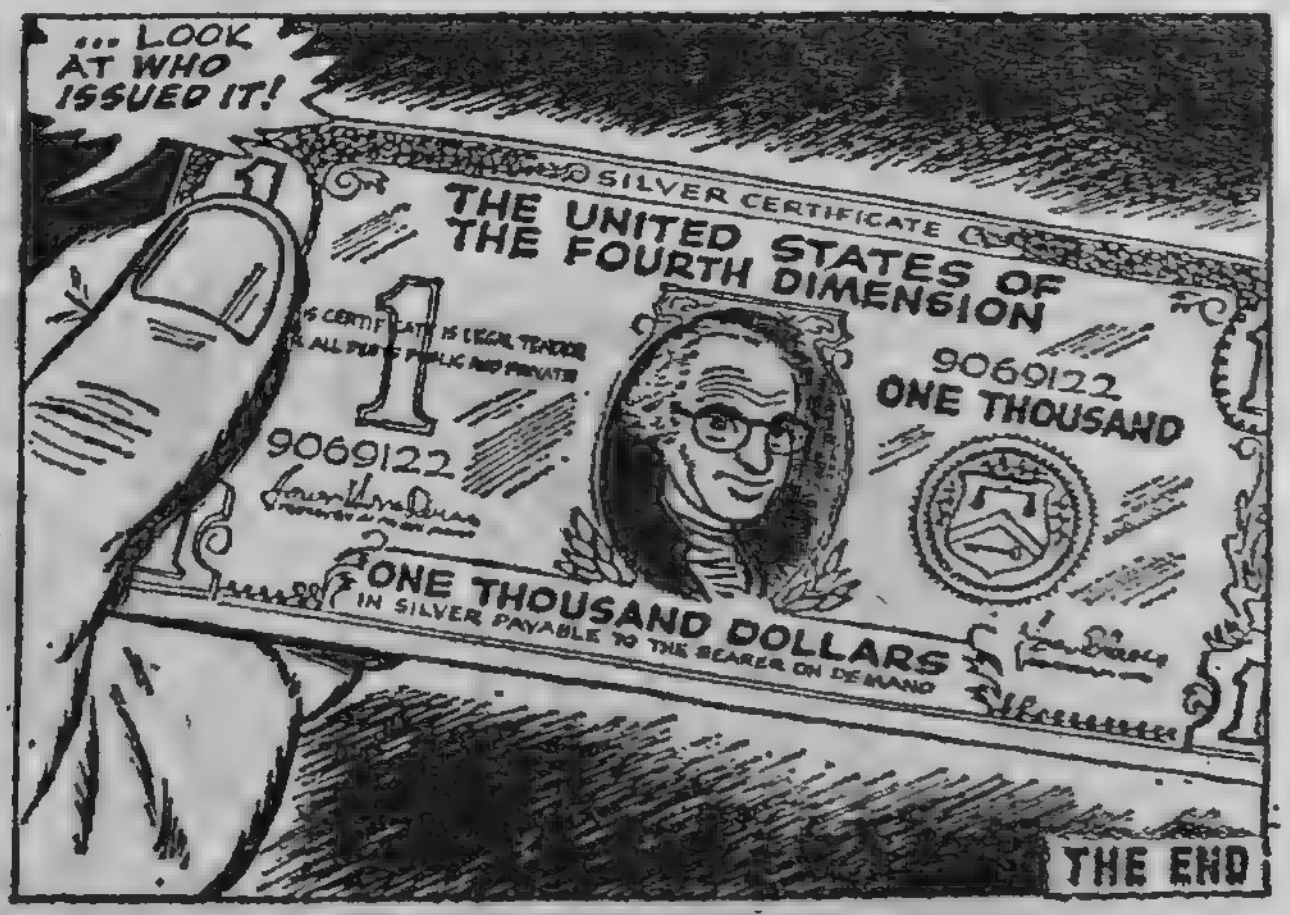
WHOOOOSSSH

THEN THE SAME BLINDING FLASH EXPLODED THAT HAD WASHED THE DESERT A BRILLIANT RED! AND WHEN THOSE BELOW NEXT SAW THE CAR ...
IT'S EMPTY!
THE STRANGER'S VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!

WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED UP THERE?
COULD IT BE THAT HE CAME HERE BY MISTAKE ... AND THE SPEED OF THE ROLLER COASTER WAS HIS WAY OF GETTING BACK?
I ALWAYS FELT HE WASN'T FROM THIS WORLD!

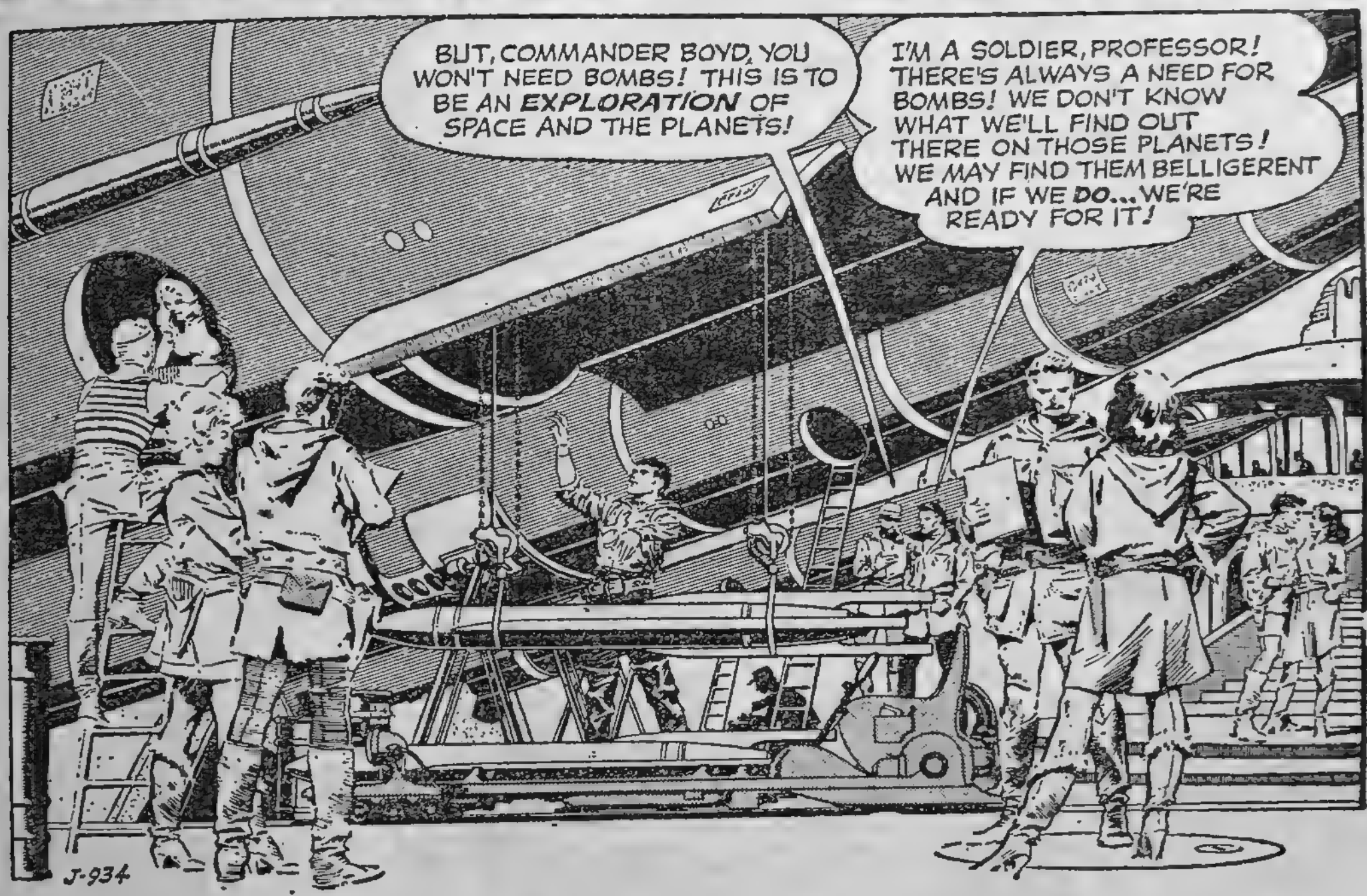
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD HE EVER HAVE PILED UP ALL THAT MONEY IN HIS SUITCASE ... IF HE'S JUST COME HERE FROM ANOTHER WORLD?
HEY!

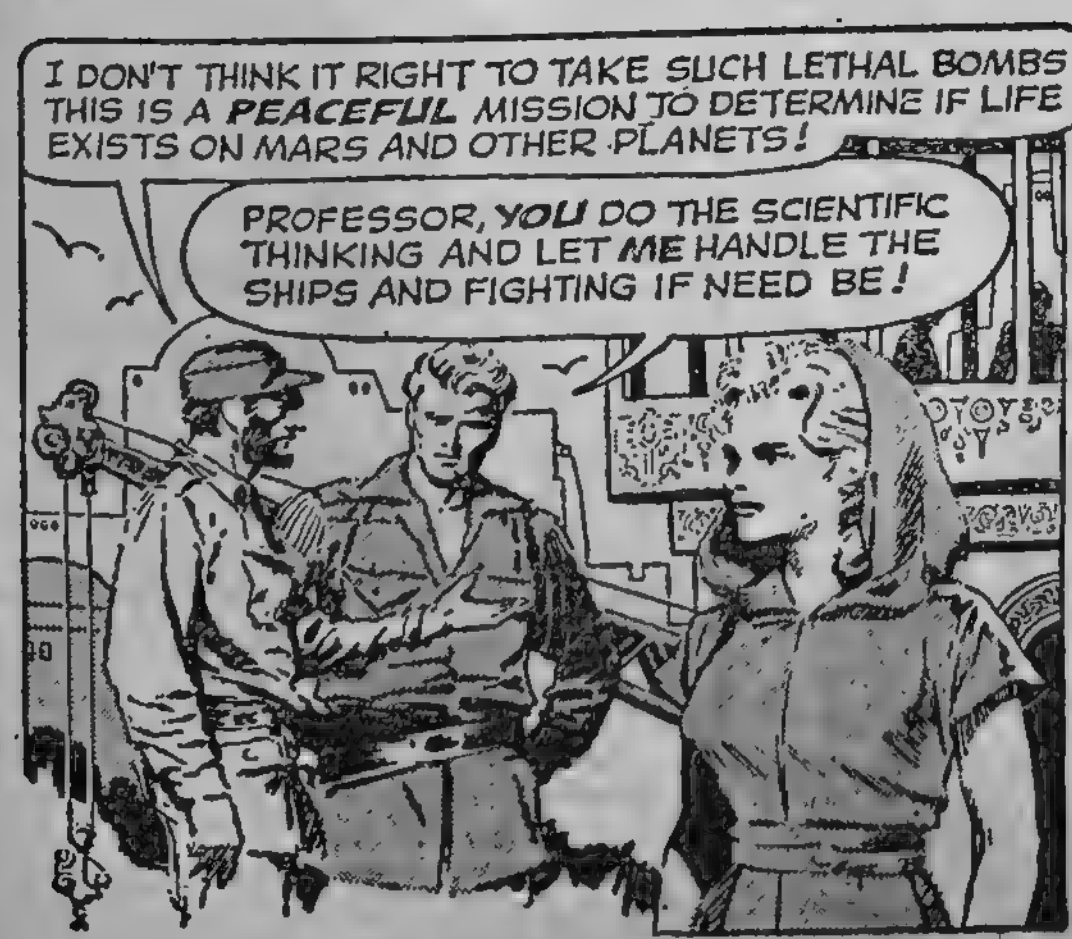
I'M FROM THE BANK! WE JUST CHECKED OVER THAT MONEY YOU DEPOSITED! IT'S EXACTLY LIKE OURS! BUT...

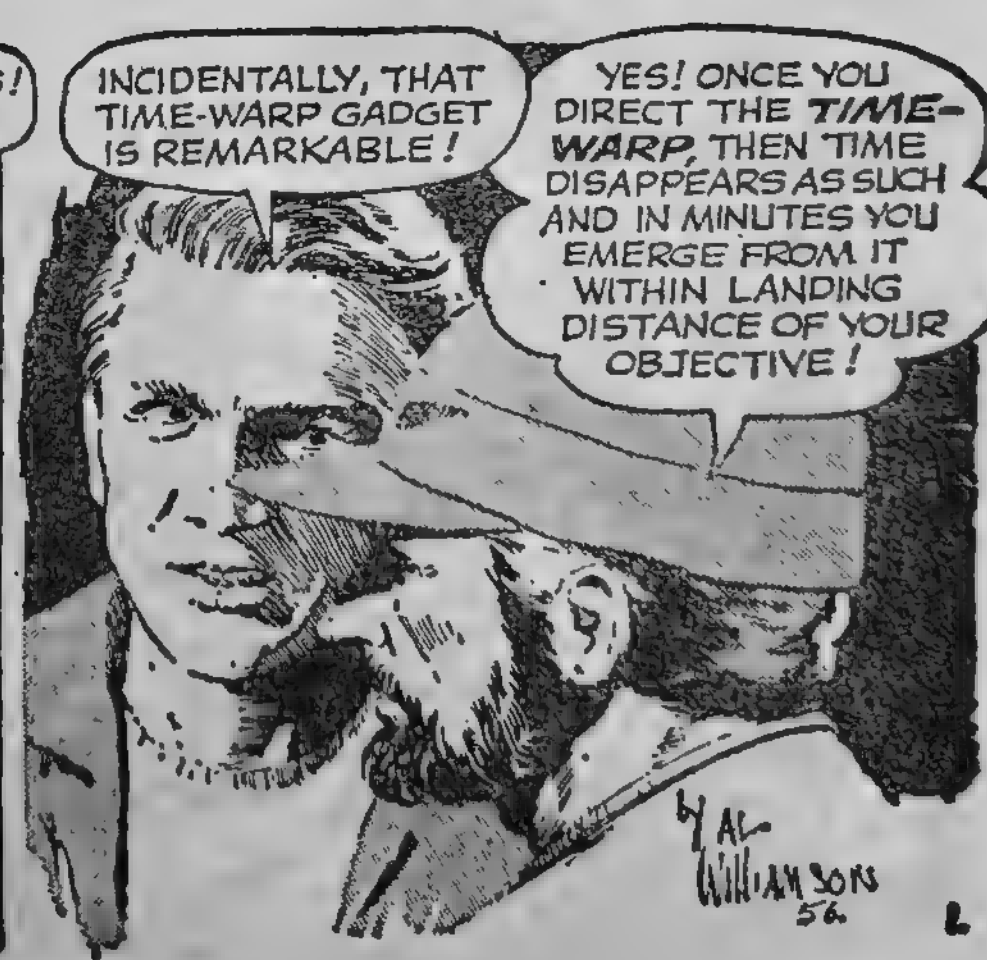

... LOOK AT WHO ISSUED IT!
SILVER CERTIFICATE
THE UNITED STATES OF THE FOURTH DIMENSION
9069122
ONE THOUSAND
ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS
IN SILVER PAYABLE TO THE BEARER ON DEMAND
THE END

COMMANDER KIT BOYD'S PHILOSOPHY WAS TO ALWAYS BE READY TO STRIKE QUICKER AND HARDER THAN THE OTHER-FELLOW! HE WAS A MILITARY-CAREER MAN, TRAINED TO THINK IN TERMS OF BIGGER AND BETTER BOMBS, TO STRIKE BEFORE THE ENEMY HITS YOU! AND NOW HE HAD ACHIEVED THE ULTIMATE, TO COMMAND THE FIRST GROUP OF SPACESHIPS IN THE INVASION OF SPACE AND THE OUTER PLANETS!

MENACE FROM THE STARS!







COMMANDER BOYD TURNED, HIS EYES GOING TO THE GLEAMING SHIPS...

WE WON'T JUST *EXPLORE* THE PLANETS, WE'LL *INVADE* THEM! WE'RE EQUIPPED FOR ANY EMERGENCY!

STAND BY! EMERGENCY! OBJECTS COMING FROM OUTER SPACE AT GREAT SPEED! UNIDENTIFIED!

BOMBS!

REPORTS COMING IN! BOMBS DROPPING ALL OVER THE WORLD! RADAR TRACKING PROJECTORIES! ALL UNITS STANDING BY! *EMERGENCY!*

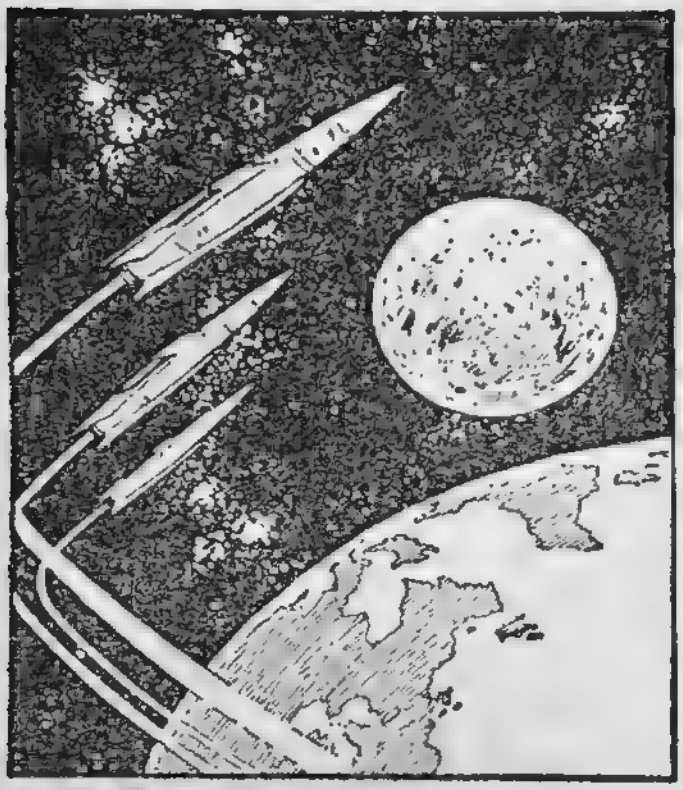
MOMENTS PASSED... MANKIND TURNED THEIR EYES TOWARD THE STARS, BUT COMMANDER BOYD LOOKED UPWARD WITH ANTICIPATION! THIS WAS WAR! THIS WAS THE ROCK ON WHICH HIS LIFE HAD BEEN BUILT!

NOW, HEAR THIS! RADAR READINGS COMPLETED! THE BOMBS ARE COMING FROM MARS! COMMANDER BOYD, STAND BY!

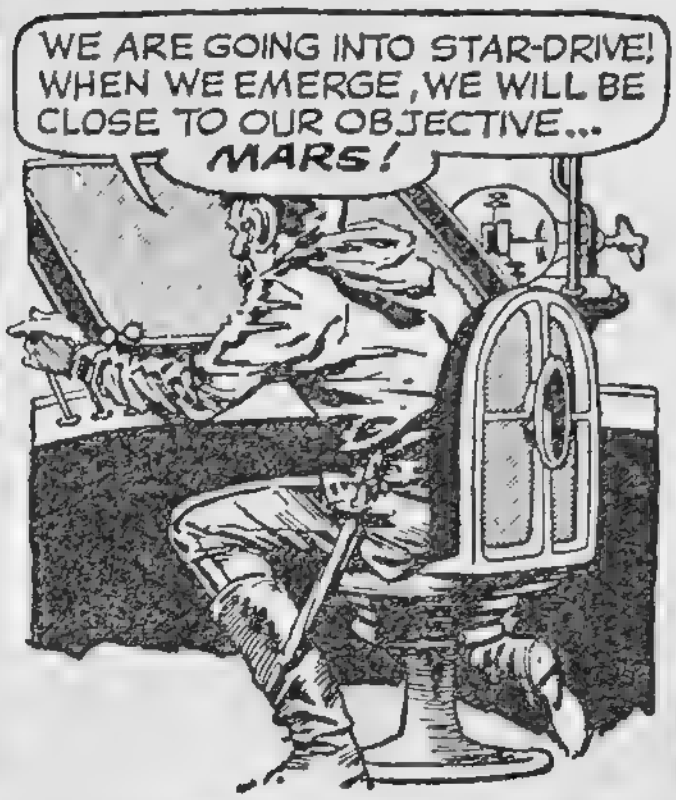
THEY'VE BEEN *SPYING* ON US! THEY KNOW WE ARE READY TO MOVE INTO SPACE! STAND BY FOR TAKE OFF! THEY WANT IT ROUGH, WHOEVER THEY ARE UP THERE AND THEY'LL *GET* IT ROUGH!

BELLS RANG! HORNS VOICED THEIR WARNINGS! THE FIELD WAS CLEARED FOR TAKE OFF! MUSHROOMS OF FLAME BLOSSOMED UNDER THE SILVER SHIPS!

AND THEN THEY WERE GONE FROM EARTH, CARRYING THEIR LETHAL LOADS INTO SPACE...

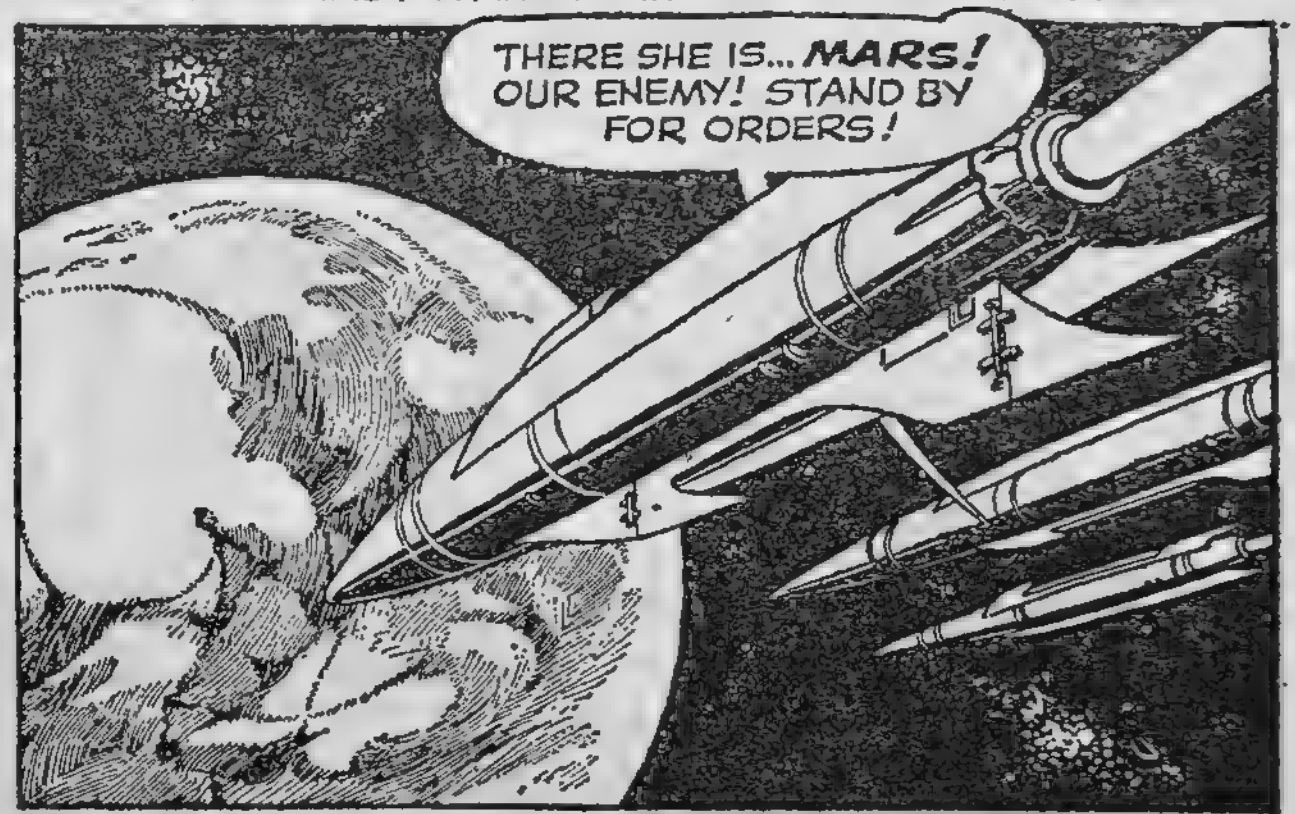


COMMANDER BOYD ISSUED LAST-MINUTE ORDERS TO HIS THREE-SHIP FLEET!



THE SHIPS WERE THROWN INTO STAR-DRIVE! FOR A MOMENT THERE WAS A VACUUM WHERE MEN EXISTED BY SOME TENUOUS THREAD AND THE STREAM OF TIME RUSHED BY...

STABILITY, CONSCIOUSNESS CAME AGAIN! MATERIALIZATION ACROSS THE VAST SPAN OF TIME CHECKED SPACE...



THE SHIPS CRASH-LANDED! THE CREWS WERE SHAKEN, BUT OTHERWISE UNHURT! BUT THE DAMAGE WAS CONSIDERABLE!

GRAVITATIONAL BARS RUINED!

SAME REPORTS FROM THE OTHER SHIPS! RUN A QUICK ATMOSPHERIC CHECK!

MOTORS BEYOND REPAIR! WE'LL NEVER LIFT THIS SHIP AGAIN!

THE ATMOSPHERE WAS CHECKED! IT WOULD SUPPORT HUMAN LIFE! THE CREWS QUICKLY LEFT THE SHIPS AND SET FOOT ON MARS...

A CITY!

WHAT *USED* TO BE A CITY! IT'S BEEN ATOMIC-BOMBED... AND NOT RECENTLY!

THEY MOVED TOWARD THE CITY...

ODD! THERE WAS ONCE A GREAT CIVILIZATION HERE, AND THEY FOUGHT A GREAT ATOMIC WAR CENTURIES AGO!

BUT... WHO FIRED THE BOMBS AT EARTH, IF MARS HAS NO MORE INHABITANTS?

I THINK I KNOW! REMEMBER, BECAUSE OF THE *VAST DISTANCE* FROM EARTH TO MARS, WE COULD NEVER GET THERE IN A MAN'S LIFETIME WITHOUT THE STAR-DRIVE! THESE BOMBS WERE SHOT INTO SPACE, PROBABLY BY THE *LAST MARTIANS!* A LAST GESTURE AGAINST THE THING THAT *DESTROYED* THEM!

THE BOMBS RUSHED THROUGH SPACE THROUGH THE CENTURIES AND FINALLY FOUND THE ORBIT OF EARTH, BY CHANCE, AND WERE PULLED DOWN BY EARTH'S GRAVITY! THERE ARE *NO ENEMIES* HERE! ONLY A GREAT LESSON! IF WE COULD ONLY GET BACK TO EARTH SO WE COULD TELL THE WORLD!

THEN MARS HAS BEEN UNINHABITED FOR CENTURIES! THERE ARE *NO* MARTIANS!

WE ARE THE *NEW* MARTIANS, LIEUTENANT! WE WILL BUILD A *NEW CIVILIZATION* HERE BASED ON *PEACE* AND GOOD WILL! AND SOMEDAY MEN WILL COME FROM EARTH TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE, AND WILL *KNOW* THERE IS *NO* MENACE FROM THE STARS!

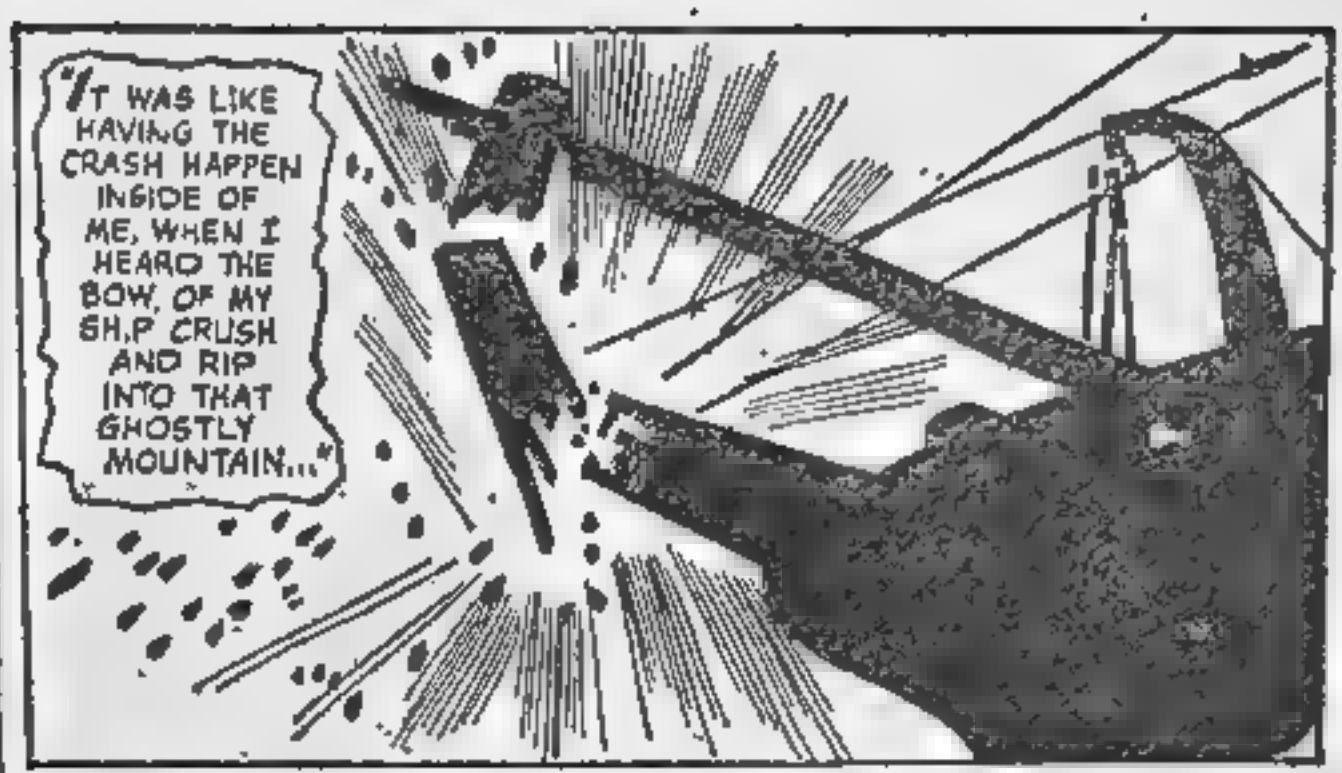
ALL MY LIFE, I HAVE BEEN A MILITARY MAN... BUT I KNOW NOW, THAT *WAR* IS *NOT* THE SOLUTION TO *ANYTHING!*

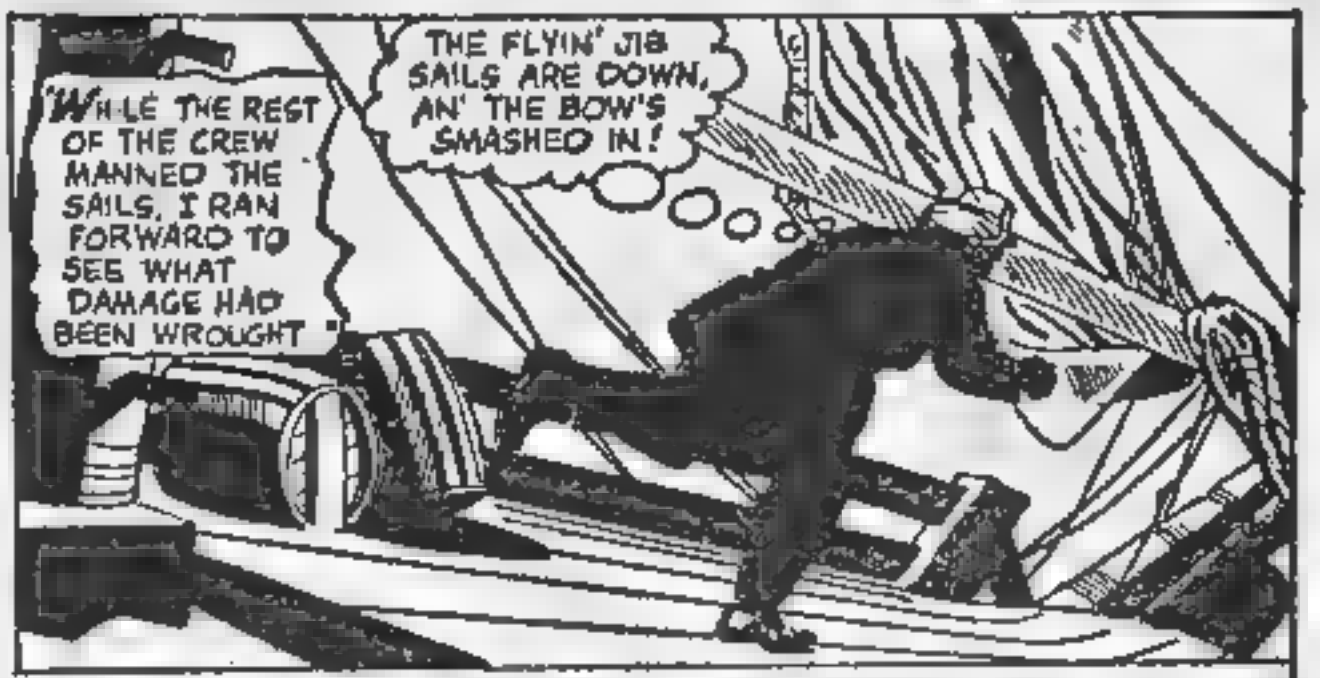
THE END

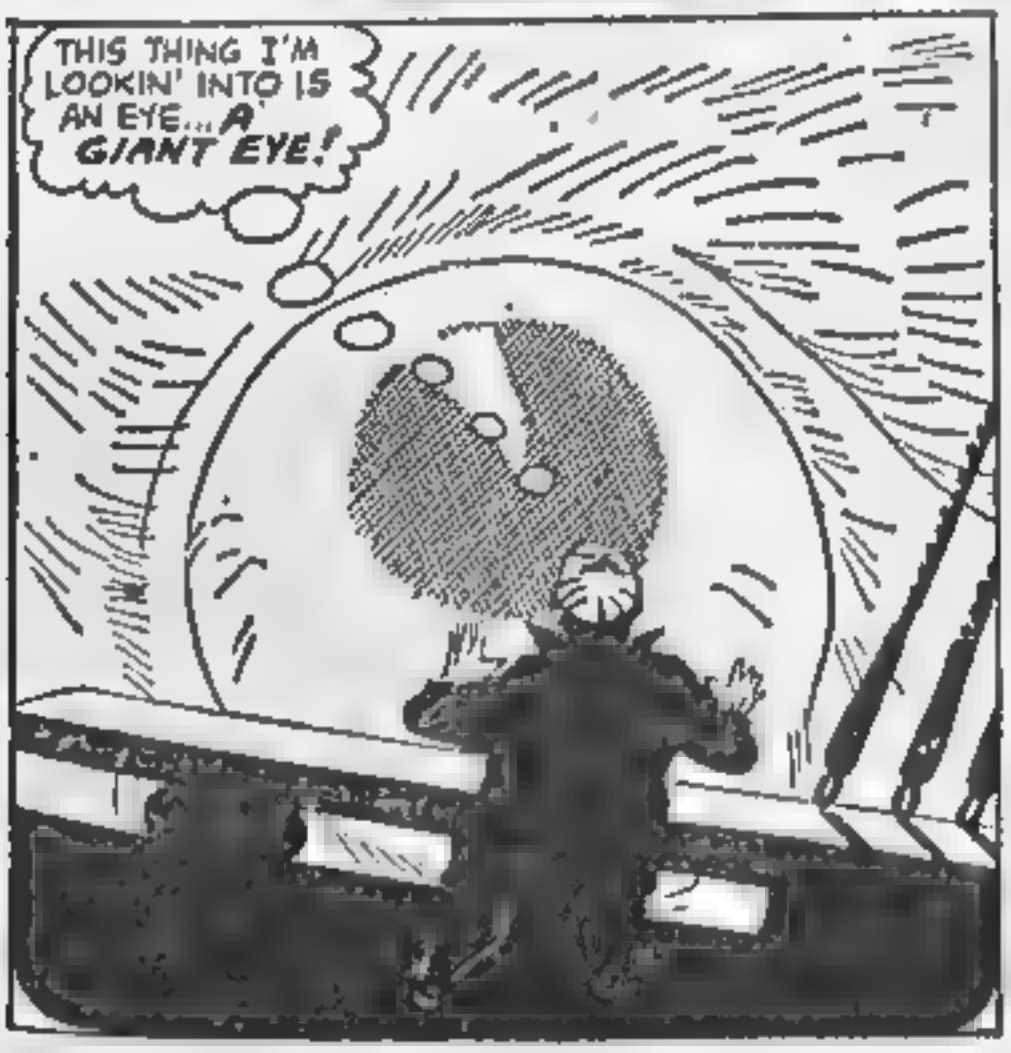
YOU'RE A SEAMAN, ALLEN BALE! YOU MAKE YOUR LIVING HUNTING WHALES, AND YOU ARE NEW ALONG THE EMBARCADERO... SAN FRANCISCO'S 3½ MILES OF PIERS! IT IS NIGHT AND YOU STROLL TO THE WHARF AT CHINA BASIN, WAY AT THE OTHER END FROM THE TOURIST-PACKED FISHERMAN'S WHARF! AND THERE YOU SEE AN ANCIENT SEA CAPTAIN MENDING NETS! HE CALLS TO YOU! HE WANTS TO SPEAK TO YOU! HE WANTS TO TELL YOU THE STRANGE STORY OF...

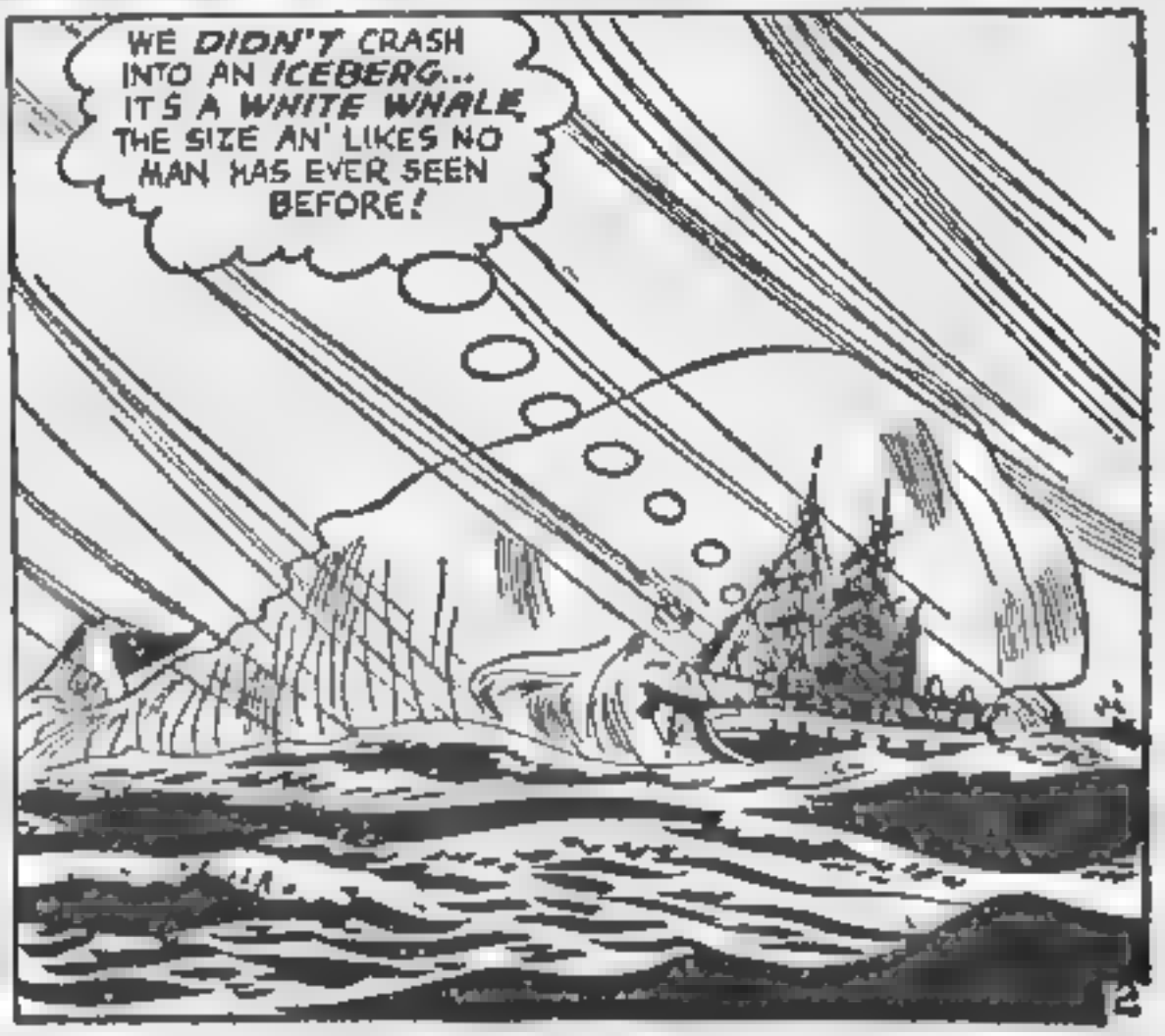
SOMETHING IN THE SEA!

"THEN SUDDENLY, WE SAW A MOUNTAIN OF WHITE POKE THROUGH THE GREEN FOG..."

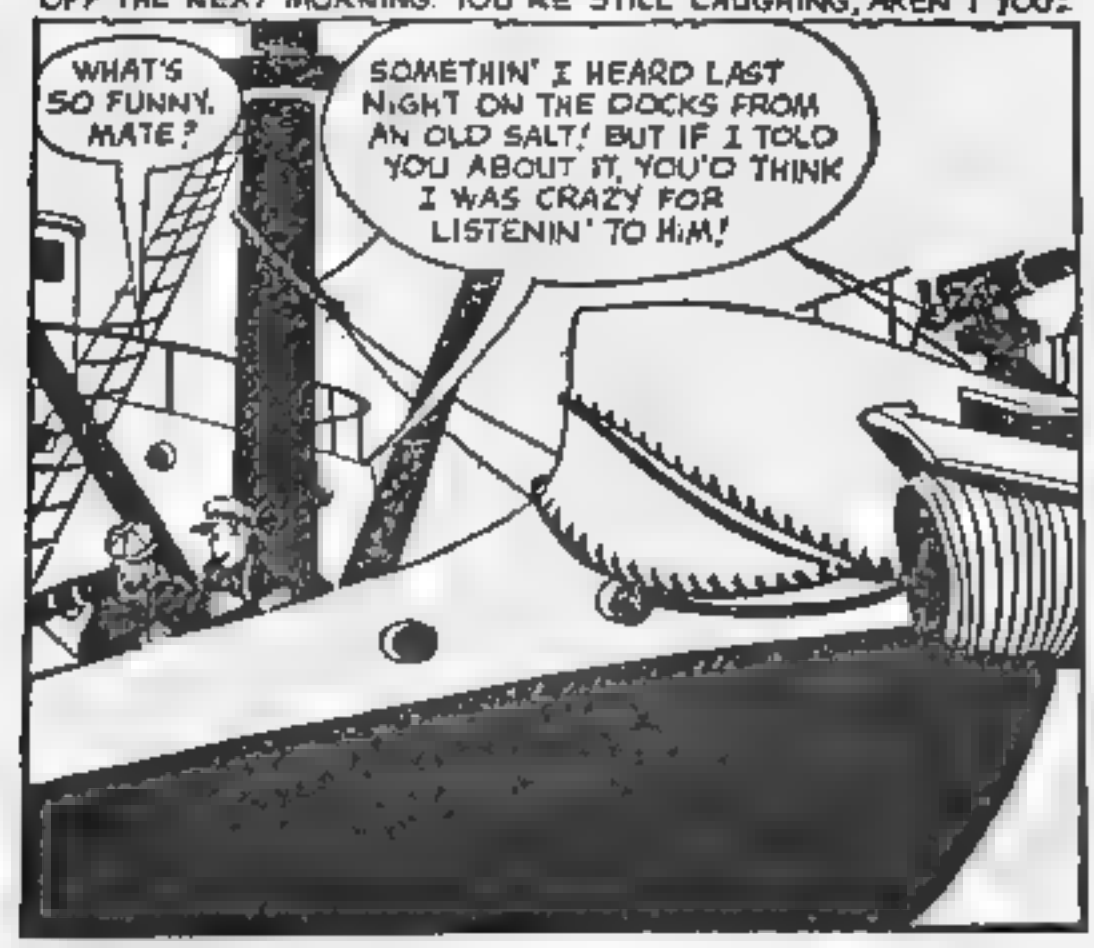




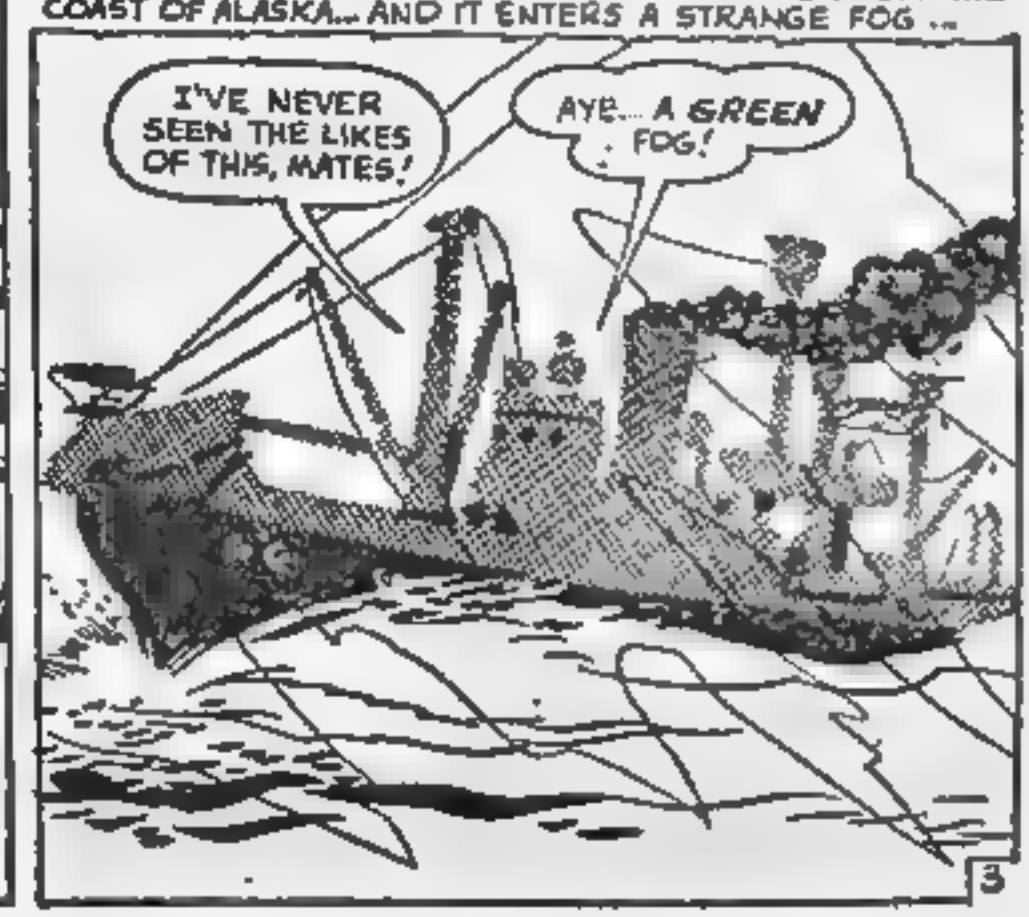




WHEN THE WHALER YOU'VE SIGNED ON, ALLEN BALE, SHOVES OFF THE NEXT MORNING. YOU'RE STILL LAUGHING, AREN'T YOU?



THE OLD SEA CAPTAIN AND HIS STORY AMUSE YOU, UNTIL A FEW DAYS LATER, WHEN YOUR SHIP IS SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF ALASKA... AND IT ENTERS A STRANGE FOG ...



YOUR BOAT IS SMASHED TO SPLINTERS AND YOU YELL OUT...

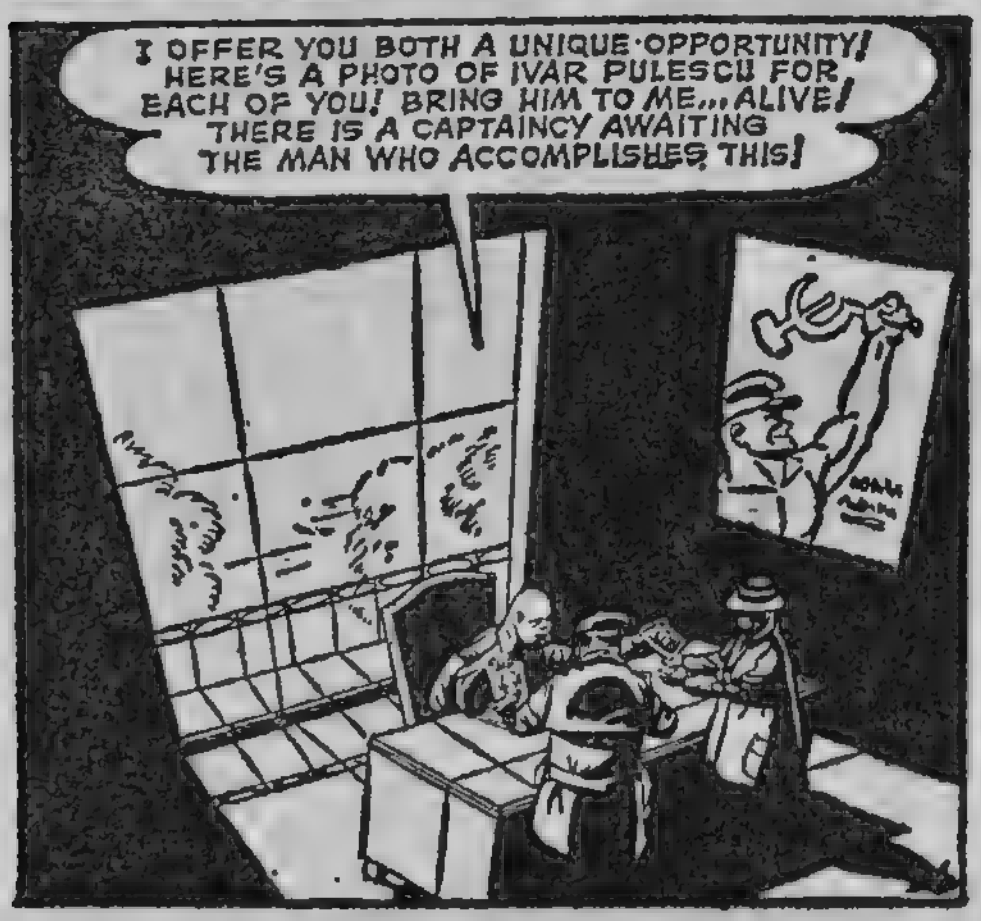
AND NOW THE VOYAGE IS OVER, AND YOU'RE ON THE EMBARCADERO IN SAN FRANCISCO, LOOKING FOR THE ANCIENT CAPTAIN...

AFTER SEARCHING ALL FORTY-THREE OF THE PIERS IN VAIN, YOU ASK A POLICEMAN IF HE HAS SEEN THE MAN...

YES, YOU, ALLEN BALE! YOU HAVE WHITE HAIR AND A WHITE BEARD AND ON YOUR CAPTAIN'S CAP THERE ARE THE WORDS "SEA HAWK"! AND NOW YOU'RE ON THE PIER MENDING YOUR FISH NET, AND EVERYBODY LAUGHS AND RIDICULES YOU AS YOU GO ON TELLING YOUR STRANGE STORY OF... SOMETHING IN THE SEA!

SECRET POLICE CHIEF KOVARNO WANTED HIS MOST TROUBLESOME ENEMY, IVAR PULESCU BROUGHT BACK BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN BY ANY MEANS! IT MEANT A RISE IN RANK FOR THE MAN WHO ACHIEVED THIS FEAT, AND OFFICER JAN LOTA FOUND A FANTASTIC WAY TO CAPTURE THE ELUSIVE FOE OF TYRANNY...

the HIDDEN MAN!



CHIEF KOVARNO CURTLY WISHED OFFICERS JAN LOTA AND ANTON RIMAK LUCK AND SENT THEM ON THEIR WAY...

I'VE PLANNED HOW I'D CAPTURE THAT TRAITOR FOR MONTHS! I WAS TEMPTED TO ASK KOVARNO FOR MY CAPTAIN'S STRIPES IN ADVANCE!

RIMAK, WHEN YOU ARE MADE CAPTAIN, I WILL BE COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL SECURITY!

OFFICER JAN LOTA HAD ALSO PREPARED HIMSELF FOR THE APPREHENSION OF PULESCU! THROUGH A COUSIN, HE MET ONE RUDOLF RADOV, AN UNDERLING AT HIS COUNTRY'S LEGATION IN WEST GERMANY...

IT IS GOOD OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO DINNER, JAN... BUT I CANNOT HELP YOU MUCH! I KNOW ONLY THAT PULESCU IS SOMEWHERE IN THIS CITY!

I'LL NEED A DISGUISE! IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I AM NOT RECOGNIZED BY ANY OF THE TRAITOR'S COMRADES!

THERE I CAN BE OF HELP! I KNOW OF A CERTAIN CHEMIST WHOSE SHOP IS NOT FAR OFF! HE'S A COUNTRYMAN OF OURS... MAX BOLAR! TRUST HIM! HE IS VERY CLEVER!

A CHEMIST... DISGUISE ME? WELL, ALL RIGHT, RUDOLF, IF YOU SAY SO!

POLICE AGENT JAN LOTA HURRIED TO BOLAR'S SHOP THAT VERY NIGHT! HE RAPPED AT THE DOOR A CERTAIN WAY, AND GAVE A PASSWORD FURNISHED HIM BY RUDOLF RADOV...

YOU WANT A DISGUISE? I ASSUME YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR IVAR PULESCU?

WHOM I LOOK FOR DOES NOT CONCERN YOU, BOLAR! SO, YOU THINK IT'S PULESCU? WHY?

IT'S ABOUT TIME CHIEF KOVARNO SENT SOMEBODY TO GET THAT MAN! HAVE YOU HEARD HIS BROADCASTS TO OUR COUNTRY? WELL, ABOUT THAT DISGUISE! I HAVE A SCHEME! HAVE YOU A PHOTO OF PULESCU, MR. LOTA?

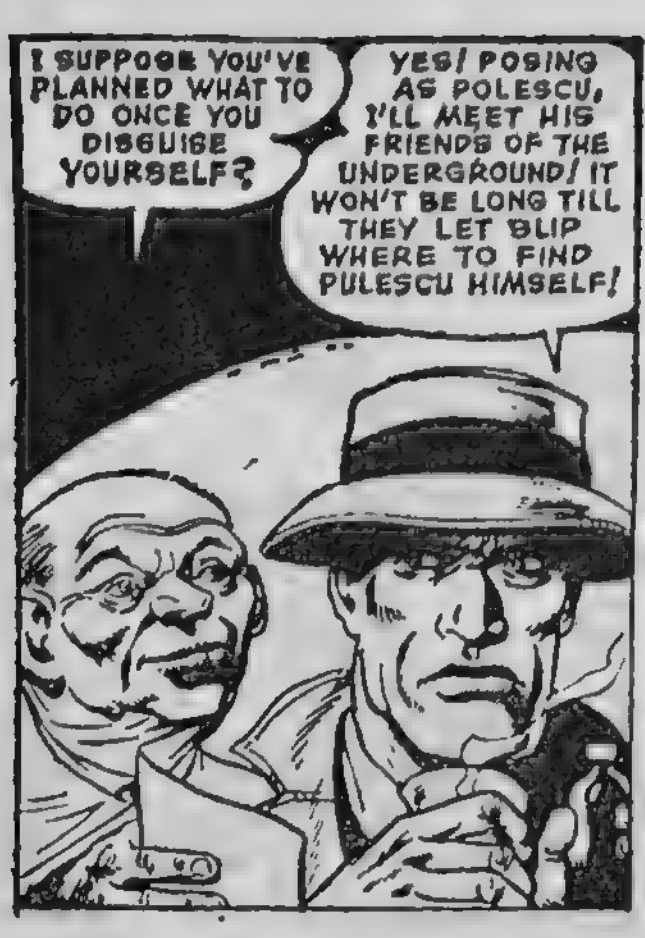
I HAVE! WHAT IS THIS SCHEME?

IT WILL COST YOU PLENTY! NO, KEEP THE PHOTO! I WILL GIVE YOU A POTION I'VE COMPOUNDED! YOU WILL CONCENTRATE ON PULESCU'S PHOTO AS YOU DRINK IT... AND YOU'LL HAVE A PERFECT DISGUISE! YOU'LL LEAVE HERE LOOKING LIKE PULESCU!

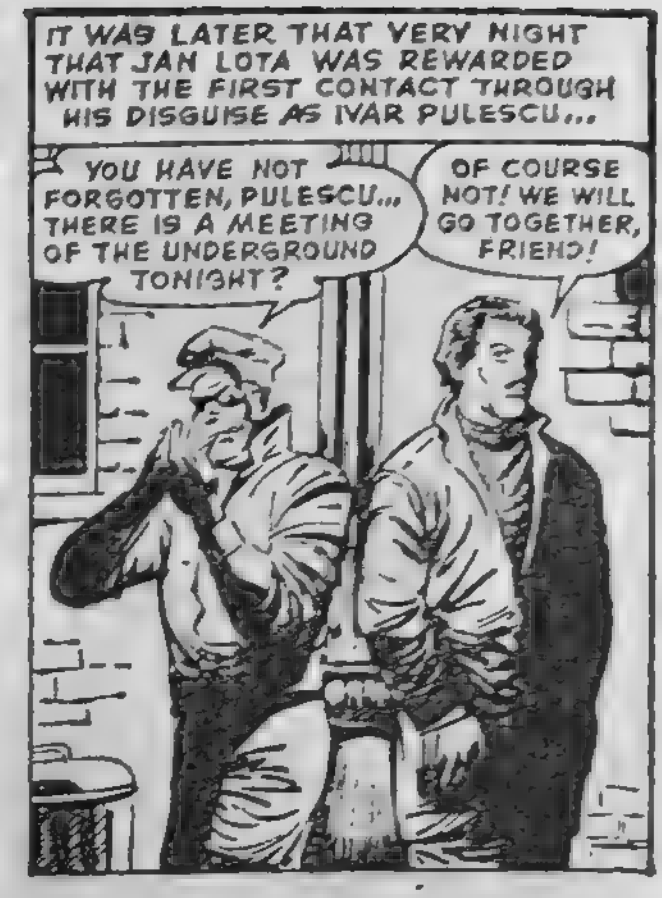
IF YOU CAN DO THIS, THEN I'LL PAY YOU ONE THOUSAND AMERICAN DOLLARS!

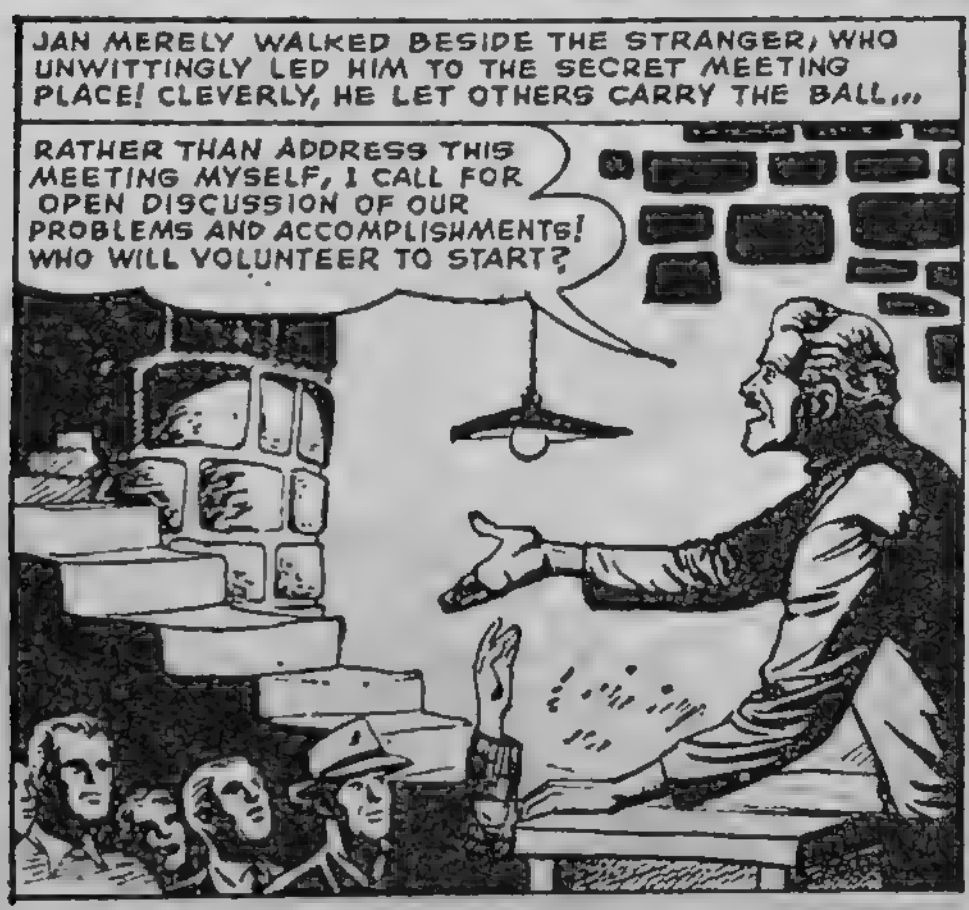
WAIT! HOW LONG WOULD I LOOK LIKE PULESCU? NOT PERMANENTLY, I HOPE!

OF COURSE NOT! EVENTUALLY, THEY MIGHT SHOOT THE WRONG MAN, EH? I HAVE A RESTORATIVE THAT WILL CHANGE YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN APPEARANCE AT ONCE!


I SUPPOSE YOU'VE PLANNED WHAT TO DO ONCE YOU DISGUISE YOURSELF?
YES! POSING AS POLESCU, I'LL MEET HIS FRIENDS OF THE UNDERGROUND! IT WON'T BE LONG TILL THEY LET SLIP WHERE TO FIND PULESCU HIMSELF!

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! BOLAR, YOU ARE EVEN MORE CLEVER THAN RUDOLF RADOV SAID!
REMEMBER TO CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES... WEAR AN OLD SUIT!


IT WAS LATER THAT VERY NIGHT THAT JAN LOTA WAS REWARDED WITH THE FIRST CONTACT THROUGH HIS DISGUISE AS IVAR PULESCU...
YOU HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN, PULESCU... THERE IS A MEETING OF THE UNDERGROUND TONIGHT?
OF COURSE NOT! WE WILL GO TOGETHER, FRIEND!


JAN MERELY WALKED BESIDE THE STRANGER, WHO UNWITTINGLY LED HIM TO THE SECRET MEETING PLACE! CLEVERLY, HE LET OTHERS CARRY THE BALL...
RATHER THAN ADDRESS THIS MEETING MYSELF, I CALL FOR OPEN DISCUSSION OF OUR PROBLEMS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS! WHO WILL VOLUNTEER TO START?

AFTERWARD, JAN LOTA CONTINUED TO PLAY HIS CARDS WISELY...
...I'M A BIT NERVOUS LATELY! I UNDERSTAND THAT MY ENEMY KOVARNO HAS INCREASED THE PRICE ON MY HEAD! WILL YOU WALK HOME WITH ME?
YOU'RE NERVOUS, PULESCU! BUT, OF COURSE, IF YOU WANT COMPANY, I'LL BE GLAD TO GO WITH YOU!

JAN WAS PREPARED WITH A READY-MADE EXCUSE TO COVER ANY MISTAKES HE MIGHT MAKE...
YOU MUST BE NERVOUS, PULESCU, HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION! YOUR QUARTERS ARE THIS WAY!
AS IF I NEED TO BE TOLD! BUT I KEEP FEELING I'M BEING FOLLOWED! BUT I'M NOT, OF COURSE...THERE'S NO ONE! LET'S GO!

YOU FORGOT TO TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS BEFORE LEAVING, PULESCU!
I DIDN'T FORGET, FRIEND! I PURPOSELY LEFT THEM ON AND SNEAKED OUT THE BACK WAY! ANYONE WATCHING WOULD THINK I WAS STILL THERE!

JAN PRETENDED TO GO UPSTAIRS, BUT WHEN HIS COMPANION WAS OUT OF SIGHT, HE RETURNED TO THE STREET...

IT WILL TAKE TIME TO GET MY CAR AND DRIVE BACK HERE, BUT THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO GET PULESCU BACK TO OUR OWN COUNTRY, EXCEPT IN THE TRUNK OF THE CAR!

AN HOUR PASSED BEFORE JAN LOTA RETURNED WITH HIS CAR! THEN HE CLIMBED A FIRE ESCAPE LEADING TO IVAR PULESCU'S FLAT! HE FOUND THE WINDOW OPEN...

A CAPTAINCY IS ALMOST WITHIN REACH! THERE MUST BE NO SLIP-UP NOW!

CAT-LIKE, HE SLIPPED UP BEHIND HIS QUARRY, AND WITH A SWIFT, SHARP BLOW OF HIS GUNBUTT, ENDED THE SEARCH FOR THE ENEMY...

IN JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES, I'LL BE SAFELY ACROSS THE BORDER, ON THE WAY HOME TO A WELL-DESERVED REWARD!

NEXT MORNING, CHIEF KOVARNO WAS BEWILDERED TO BE CONFRONTED BY TWO IVAR PULESCUS!

THIS IS A VERY GRIM JOKE! WHICH OF YOU IS PULESCU?

ME IS, SIR! I ONLY WORE THIS DISGUISE TO PROVE I'M CLEVER ENOUGH TO WARRANT THE PROMOTION YOU PROMISED! WATCH, PLEASE...I WILL DRINK THIS RESTORATIVE POTION, AND YOU'LL SEE *I* AM JAN LOTA!

THE OTHER "PULESCU" ALSO DREW A BOTTLE OF RESTORATIVE POTION FROM HIS POCKET AND GULPED DOWN THE CONTENTS! CHIEF KOVARNO WAS ENRAGED WHEN HE SAW THE TWO MEN RESTORED TO NORMAL APPEARANCE!

ANTON RIMAK! YOU FOOL!

I'M A FOOL? THAT CHEMIST, MAX BOLAR, DECEIVED *YOU* AS EASILY AS HE DECEIVED *ME!* THE SCOUNDREL...I PAID HIM A THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THAT POTION!

RUDOLF RADOV, LEGATION UNDERLING AND UNDERGROUND MEMBER, WAS VISITING CHEMIST MAX BOLAR AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE FREE ZONE OF GERMANY...

OFFICER LOTA WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REPORT ME FOR HAVING SENT HIM TO YOU, SO I'VE ALREADY MAILED IN MY RESIGNATION TO THE EMBASSY!

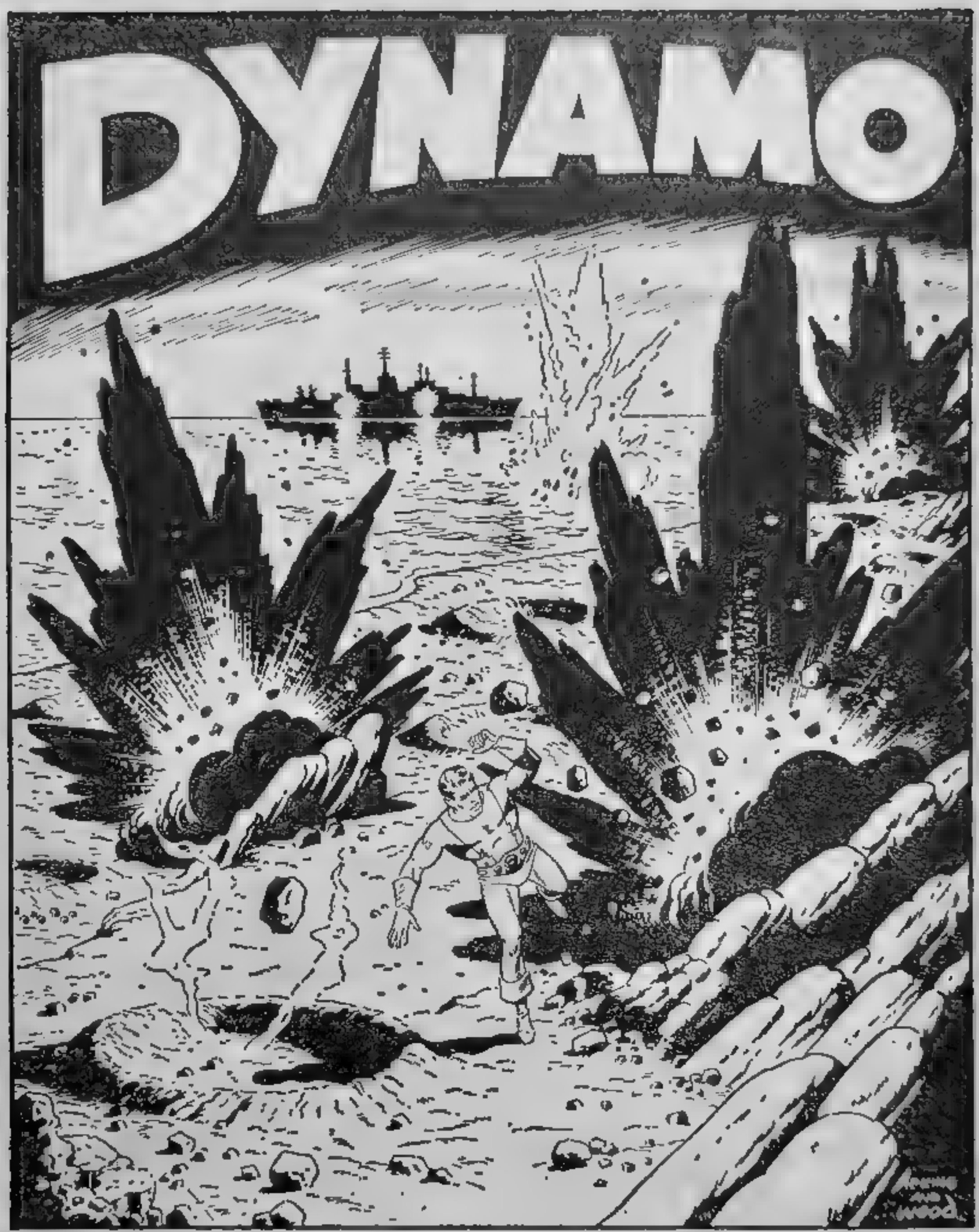
AND SOON THERE'LL BE A VISIT FROM OUR POOR COUNTRY'S SECRET AGENTS, SO I'LL DRINK THIS RESTORATIVE POTION AND PUT AN END TO "MAX BOLAR"!

A MOMENT AFTER DOWNING THE POTION, "MAX BOLAR" WAS NO MORE! IN HIS PLACE WAS THE *REAL IVAR PULESCU!*

NOW I SHALL HAVE TO ADOPT *ANOTHER* DISGUISE, RADOV!

IT MIGHT BE AMUSING, PULESCU, TO DISGUISE YOURSELF AS...SECRET POLICE CHIEF KOVARNO!

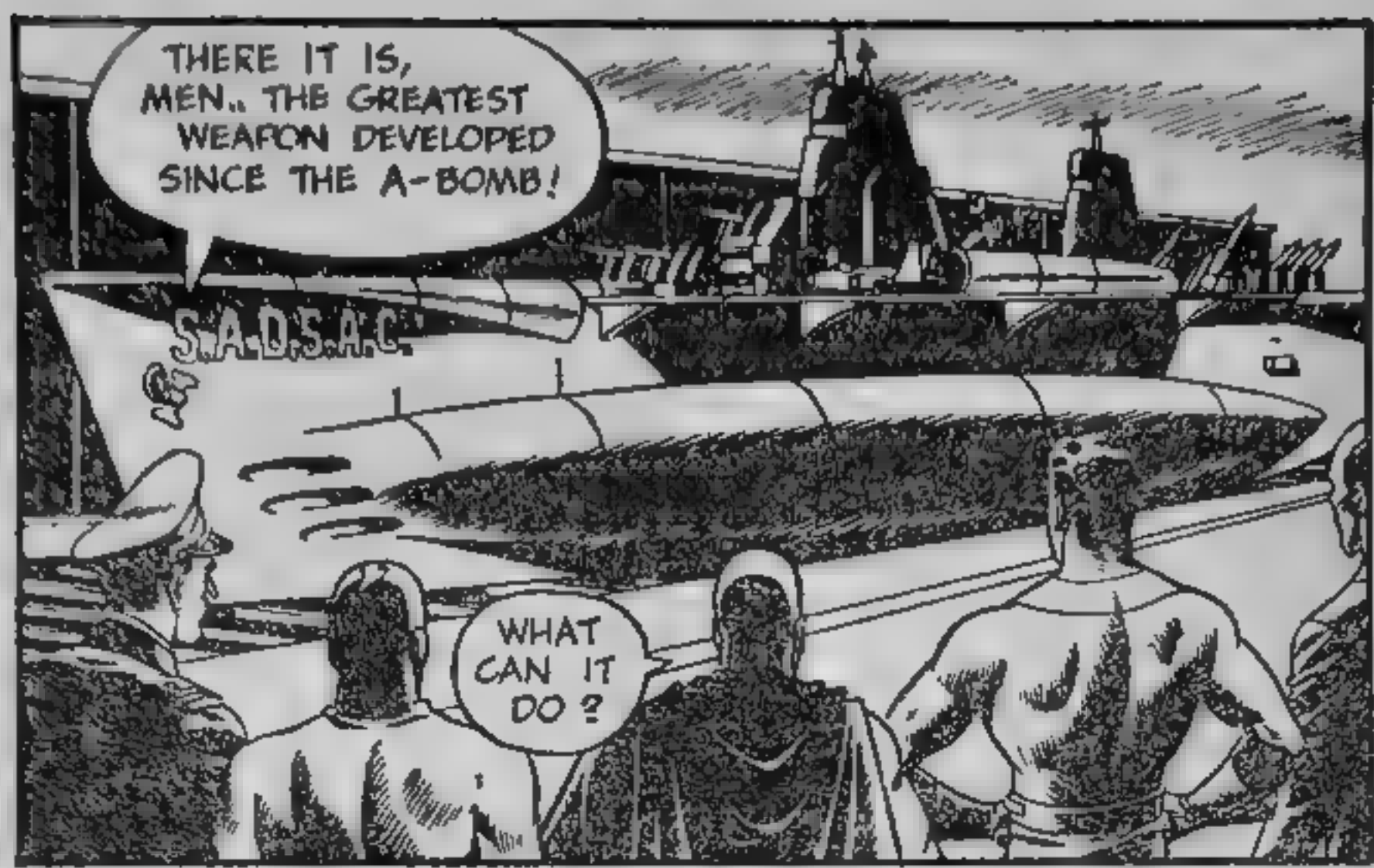
THE END

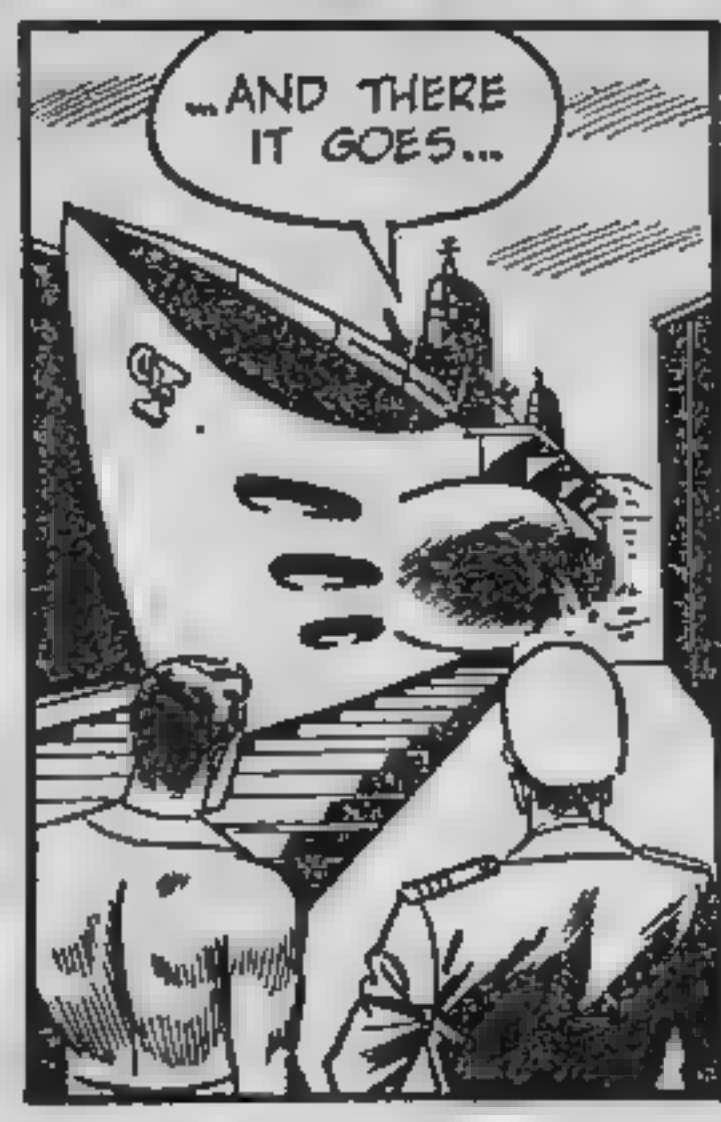


WHAT CAN ONE MAN... EVEN A MAN OF IRON DO AGAINST THE TREMENDOUS FIREPOWER OF THE MOST MODERN WARSHIP IN THE WORLD? A THREAT AGAINST THE WORLD'S MARITIME COMMERCE BRINGS DYNAMO INTO THE MOST DESPERATE CONFRONTATION OF HIS LIFE AS

"SPIDER STRIKES AT SEA!"

THE THUNDER AGENTS ARE INVITED BY THE U.S. NAVY TO EXAMINE THE SUPER ATOMIC DESTROYER SUBMARINE AIRCRAFT CARRIER OR "S.A.D.S.A.C." AS IT IS AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN...



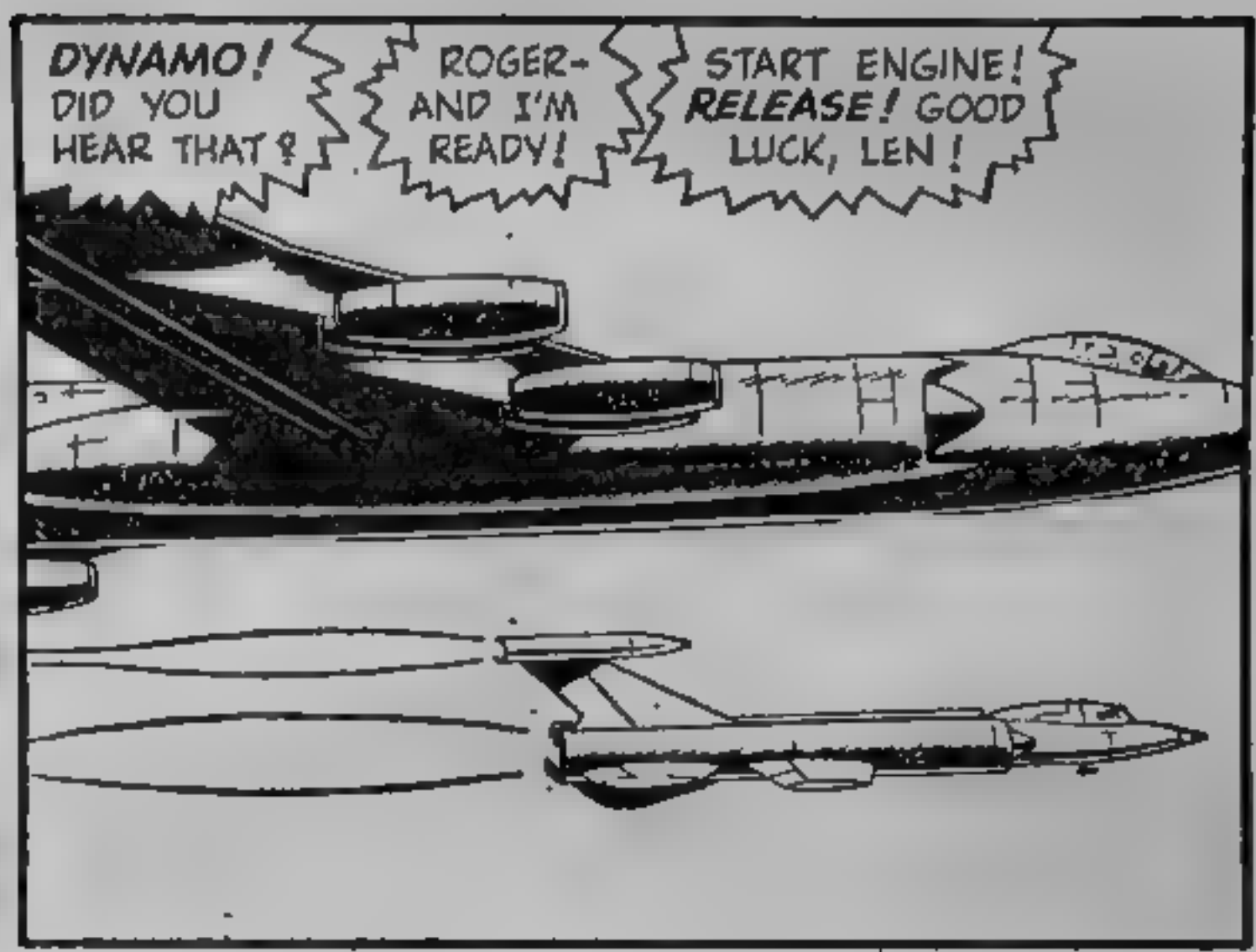


MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE SHIP...

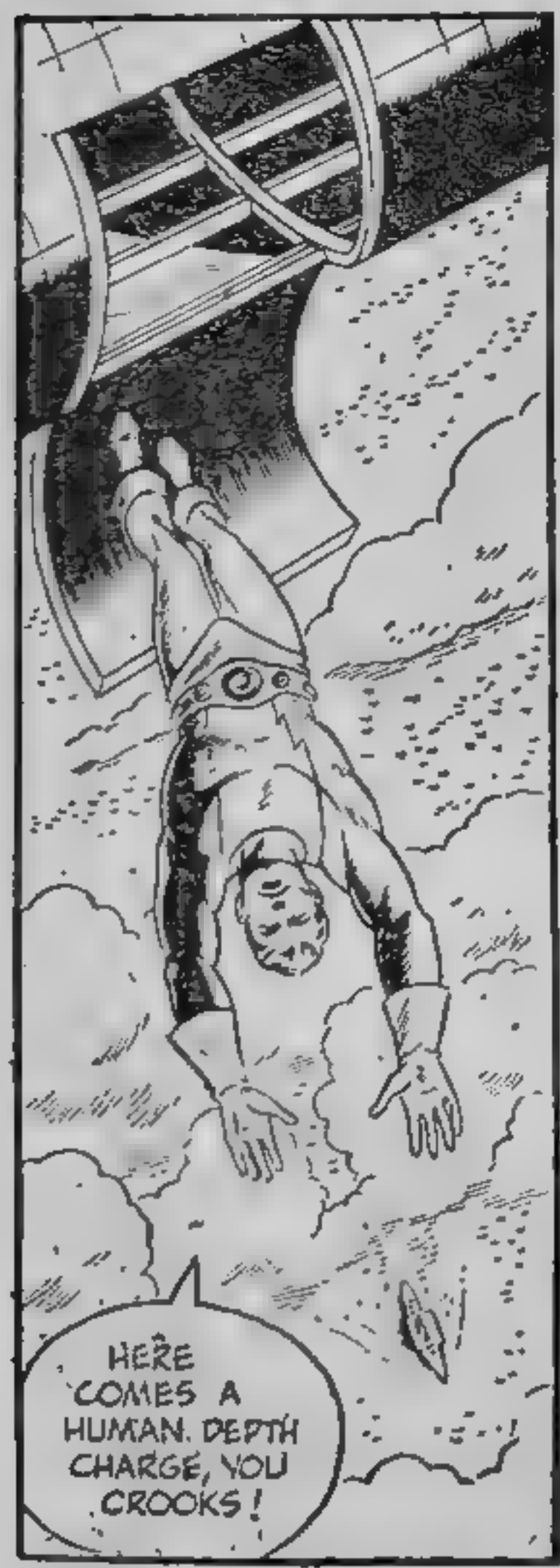
LATER AT THUNDER...

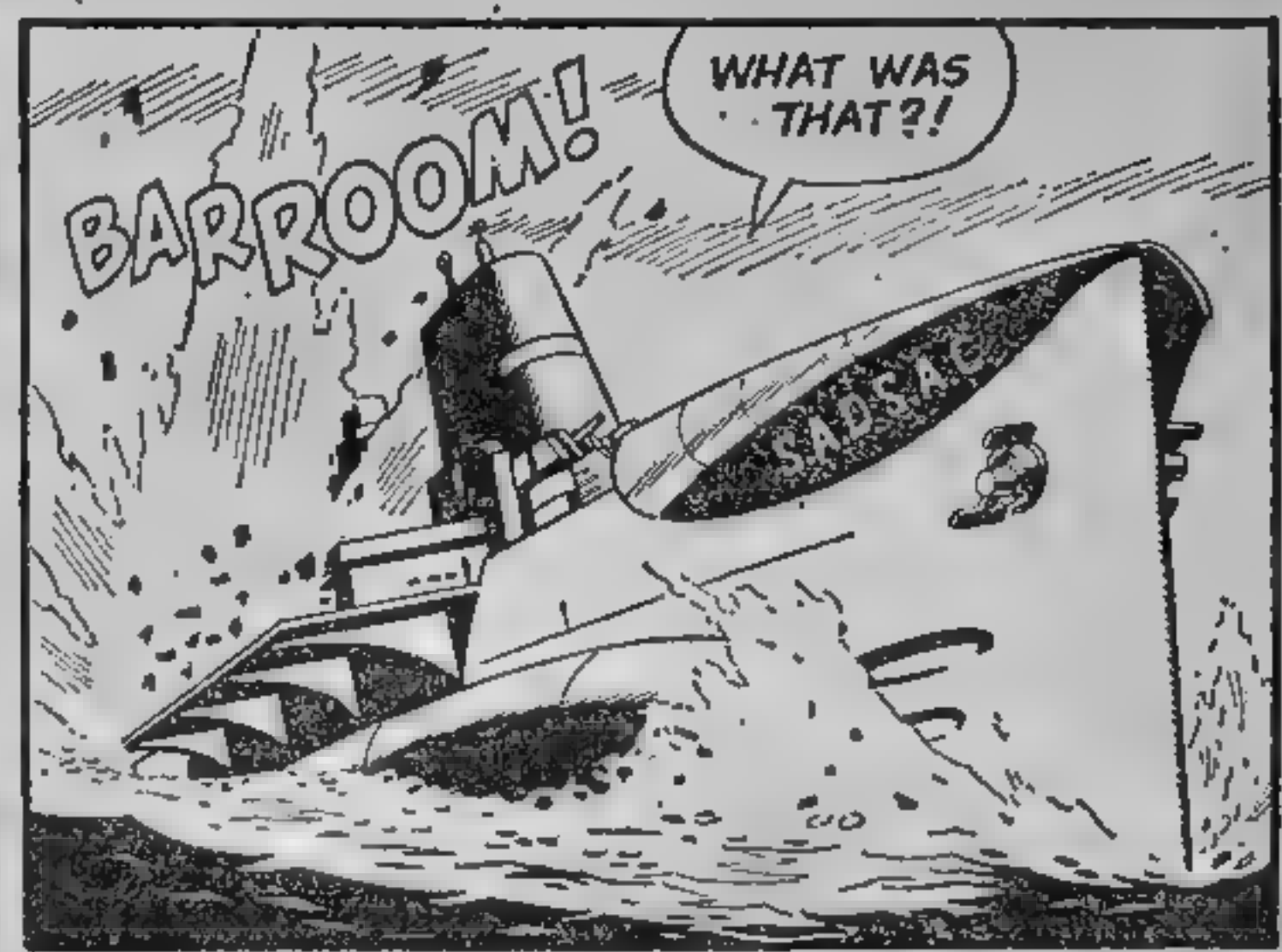
A FEW DAYS LATER, THE SECRET PEOPLE'S INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORATE FOR EXTRA-LEGAL REVENUE MAKES GOOD IT'S THREAT...

LATER...



A FEW MINUTES LATER, DYNAMO SPOTS HIS QUARRY.





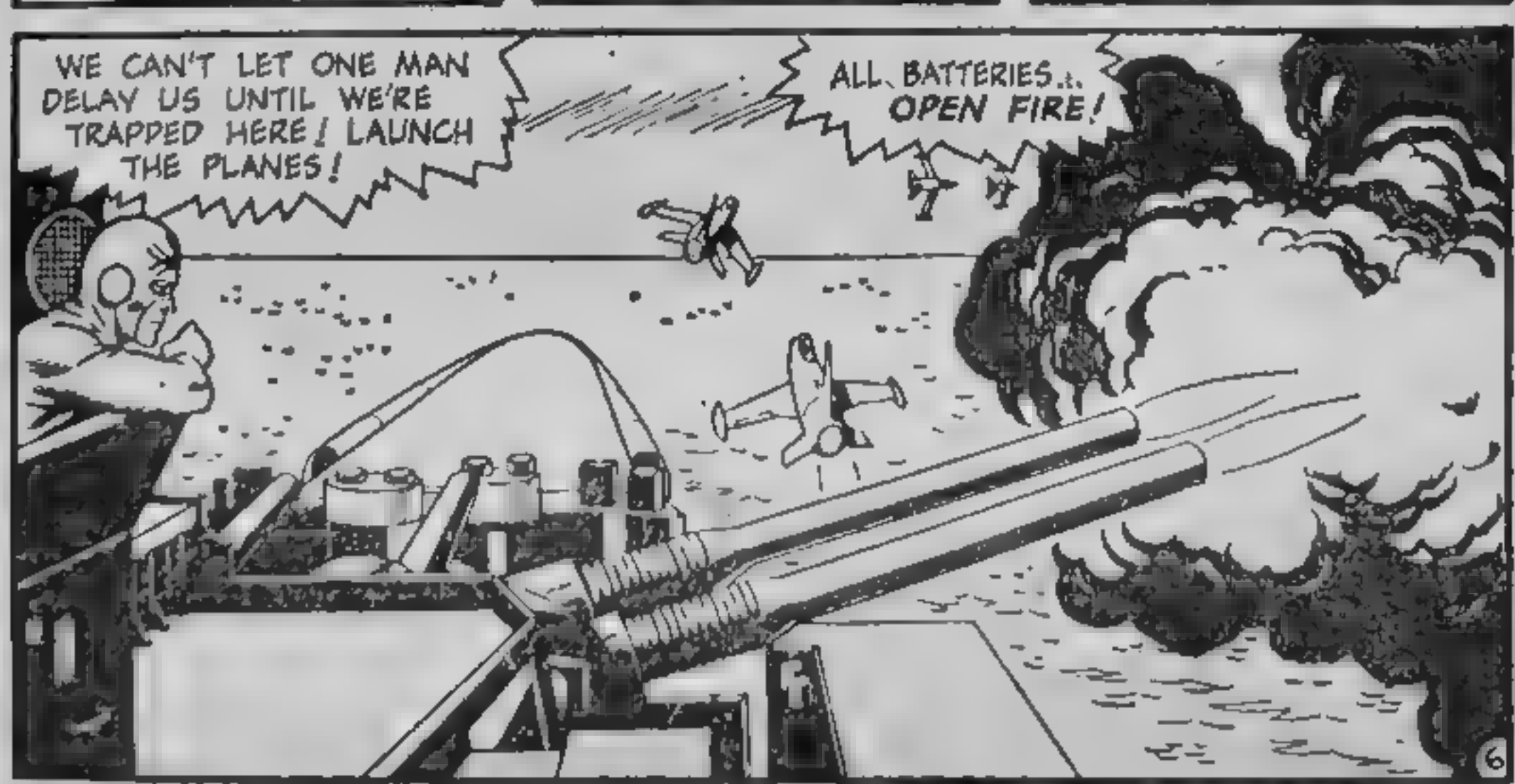
A FEW HOURS LATER...

STILL UNNOTICED BY THE SPIDER AGENTS, DYNAMO SWIMS ASHORE...

THE CREW BEGINS REPAIRS...

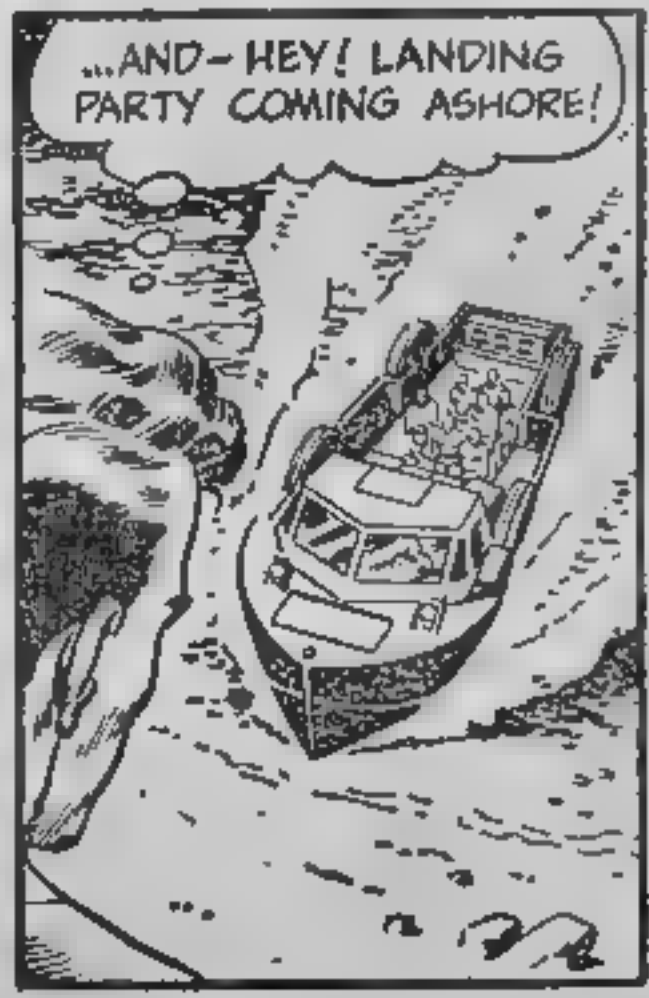
WHEN, SUDDENLY...!

DYNAMO DIGS IN...

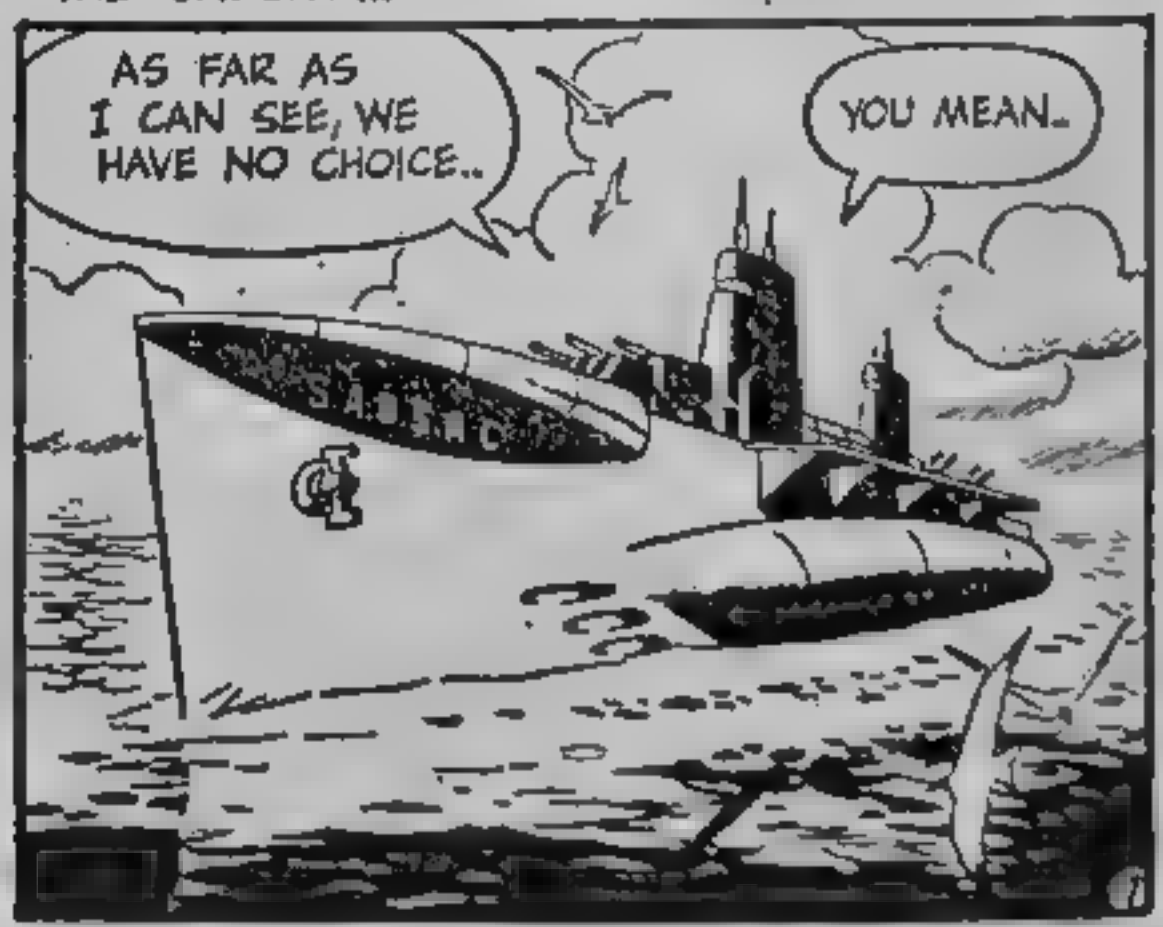


THE AIRCRAFT, ARTILLERY AND MISSILES BLANKET THE ISLAND WITH A SUSTAINED BARRAGE--

...UNTIL...



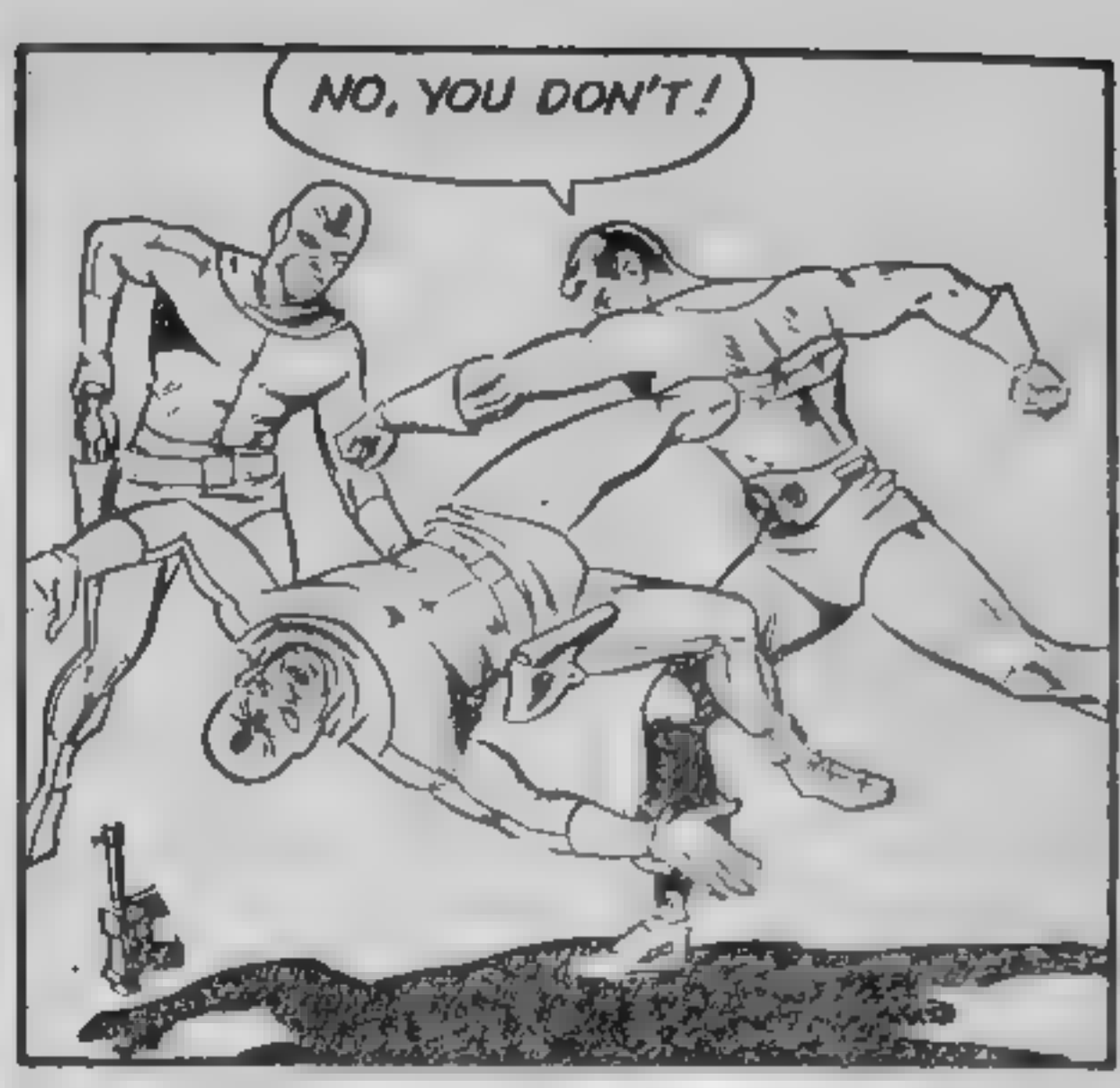
A HASTY CONFERENCE IS HELD ABOARD THE 'SADSAC'...



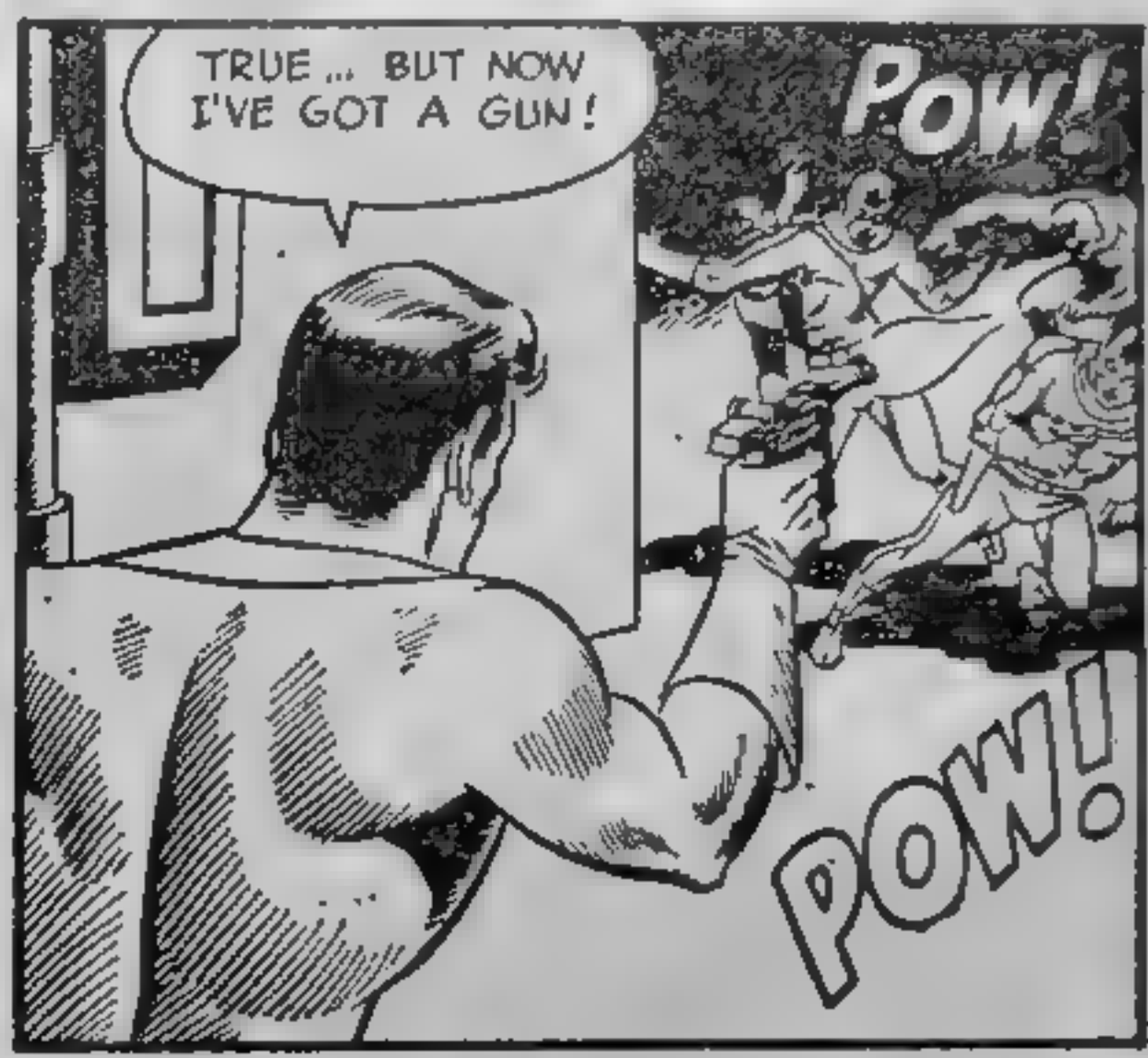
...AND THEN THE SHIP TURNS AND STEAMS AWAY FROM THE ISLAND...

AND THE GREATEST DESTRUCTIVE FORCE IN THE WORLD IS UNLEASHED ON ONE MAN...

IT'S DYNAMO!
WHO ELSE ?


NO, YOU DON'T!

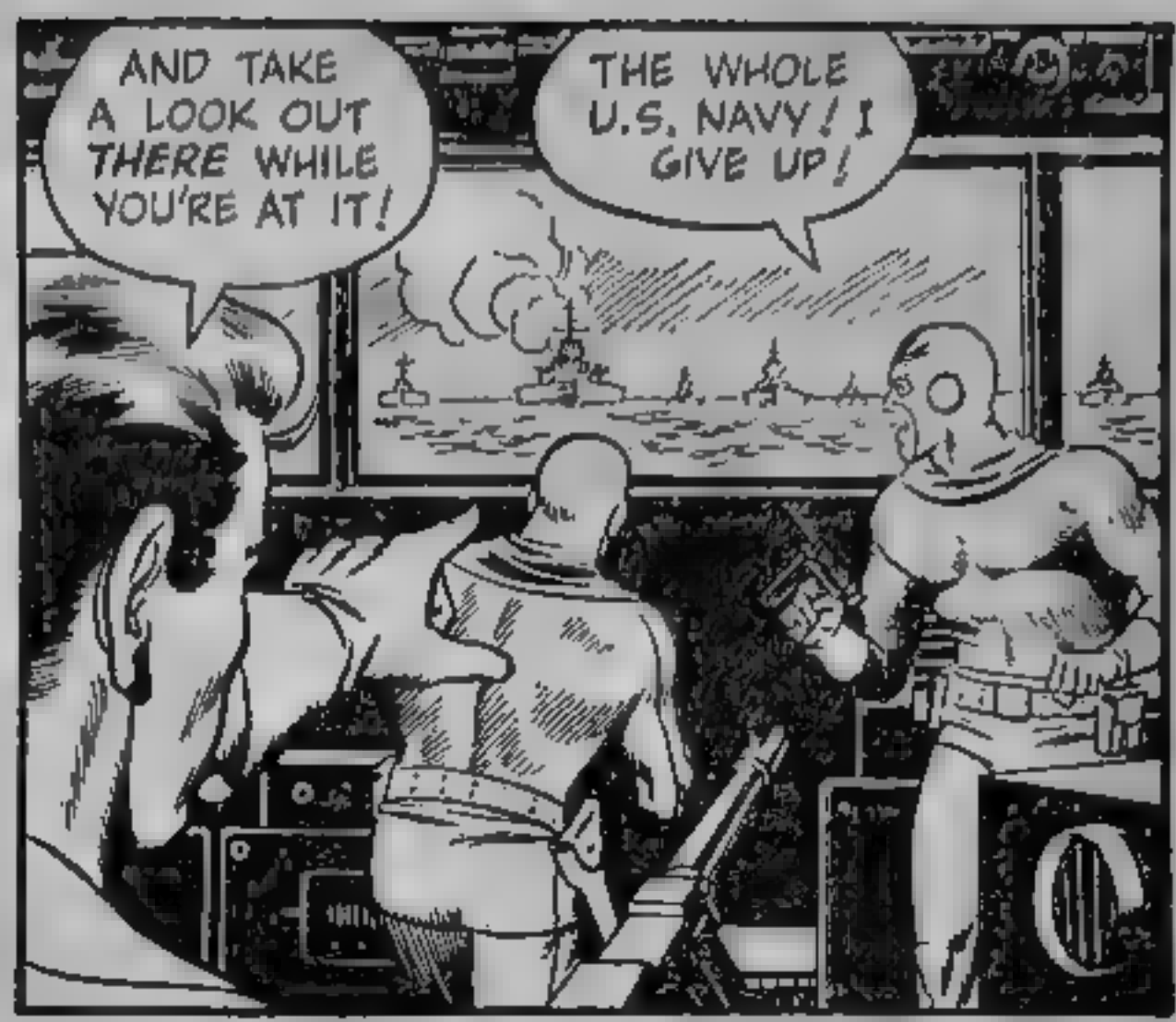
QUICK! SHOOT, YOU FOOLS!
GET HIM! HE'S ONLY GOT NORMAL STRENGTH NOW!


TRUE ... BUT NOW I'VE GOT A GUN!
POW!
POW!

GET THE CREW! USE THEM AS HOSTAGES!
ZING!

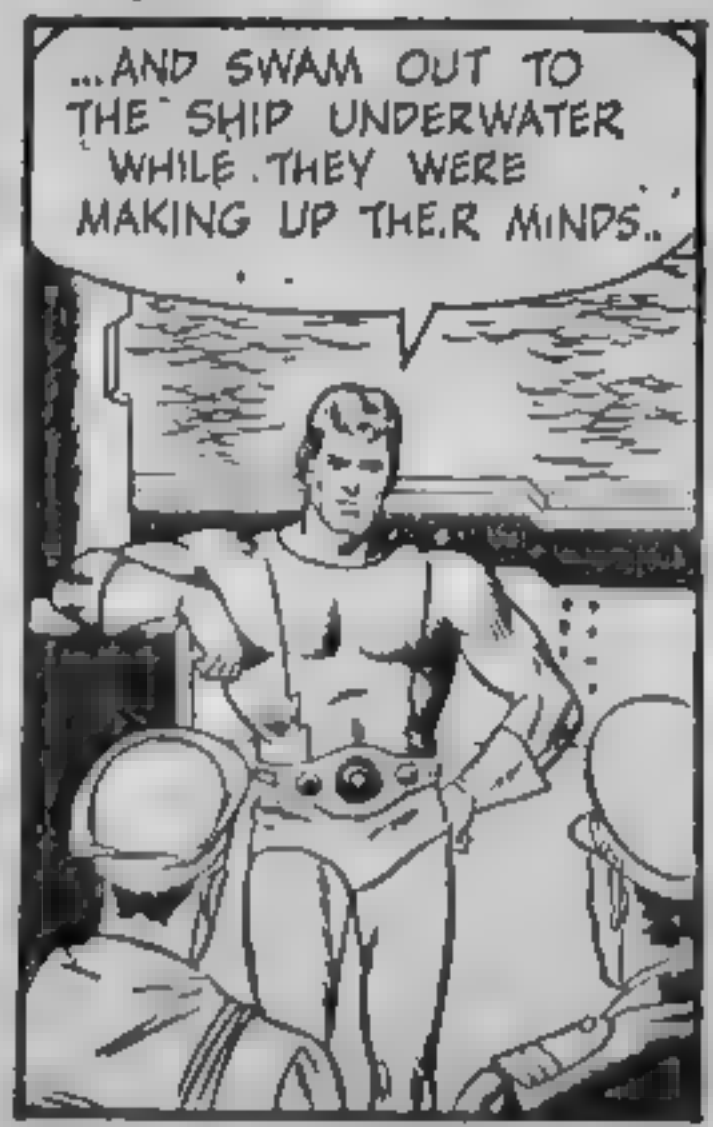
YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE... I LET THEM OUT AND ARMED THEM BEFORE I CAME UP HERE!

...AND THEY'RE BEHIND YOU RIGHT NOW!



AND IT IS OVER... EXCEPT FOR CONGRATULATIONS - AND EXPLANATIONS...

"...OUT TO THE EDGE OF THE ISLAND, UNDER SEA LEVEL!



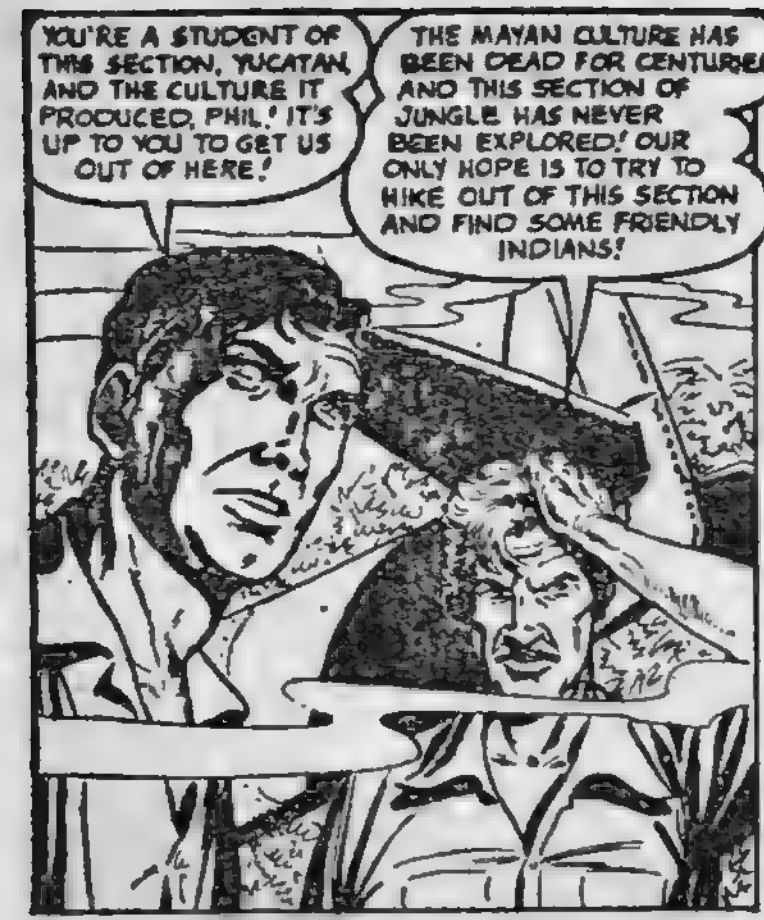
LATER, BACK AT HQ...

THE PLANE, DISABLED BY THE TROPICAL STORM, SMASHED THRU THE CURTAIN OF MIST TO CRASH IN AN UNEXPLORED SECTION OF THE YUCATAN JUNGLE! SO BEGAN THE AMAZING ADVENTURE OF TWO MEN WHO ENTERED AN ANCIENT, CRUEL WORLD THAT HELD THE SECRET TO ETERNAL LIFE... A SECRET, IRONICALLY ENOUGH, VIEWED BY MEN SENTENCED TO DEATH!

SMASH-UP!

COME WITH US INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!

AN HOUR PASSED WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF LIFE! THEN MOVEMENT BEGAN BEYOND THE SPRUNG DOOR!


YOU'RE A STUDENT OF THIS SECTION, YUCATAN, AND THE CULTURE IT PRODUCED, PHIL! IT'S UP TO YOU TO GET US OUT OF HERE!
THE MAYAN CULTURE HAS BEEN DEAD FOR CENTURIES! AND THIS SECTION OF JUNGLE HAS NEVER BEEN EXPLORED! OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO TRY TO HIKE OUT OF THIS SECTION AND FIND SOME FRIENDLY INDIANS!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE INDIANS HAVE FOUND US... ONLY THEY DON'T LOOK FRIENDLY!
THIS IS AMAZING! THESE MEN ARE DRESSED AS THE ANCIENT MAYAN WARRIORS DRESSED... EVEN THEIR SKIN AND BUILD IS ANCIENT MAYAN!

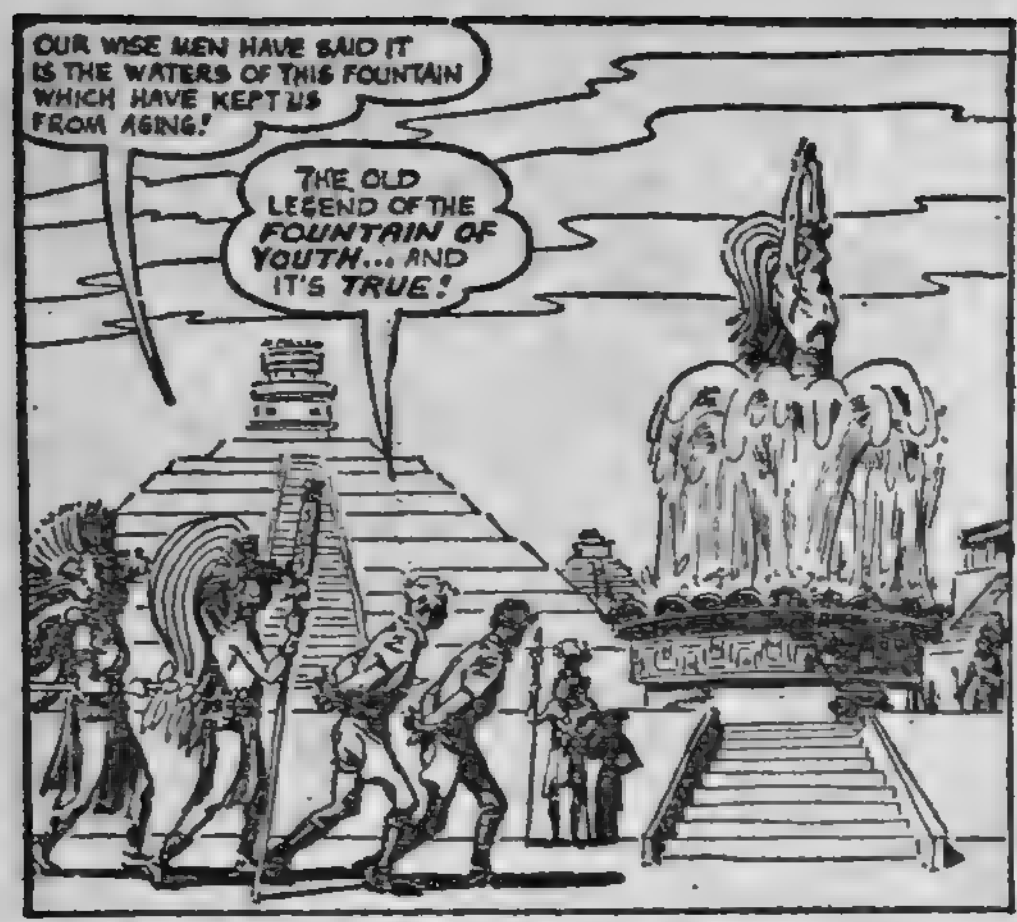
CO-OX! LIKINOB!
HE EVEN SPEAKS ANCIENT MAYAN! LIKINOB MEANS "SPANIARD"!

LISTEN, WE ARE NOT "LIKINOB." WE ARE AMERICANS... DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
CAPTIVE MANY MOONS AGO SPEAK YOUR TONGUE! UNDERSTAND! BUT YOU LIE! ALL WHITE PEOPLE LIKINOB! LIKINOB KILL MAYANS, DRIVE FROM LAND OF FOREFATHERS!

LOOKS LIKE A LAKE! BUT I NEVER SAW IT ON ANY MAPS!
THIS MIST HIDES EVERYTHING!

LOOK, AN ISLAND... AND A TYPICAL ANCIENT MAYAN CITY!
WE WERE THE LAST SURVIVORS OF OUR RACE! WE FLED FROM THE LIKINOB AND FOUND THIS PLACE AND BUILT OUR CITY IN THE MIST!

YOU MEAN YOU ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE LAST MAYANS? THE MAYAN CULTURE WAS SMASHED BY THE SPANIARDS IN THE 15TH CENTURY!
NOT DESCENDANTS! WE, ALL OF US HERE, FACED THE LIKINOB IN THOSE ANCIENT DAYS AND FLED BEFORE THEM AND CAME HERE! WE OF THE CITY OF MIST NEVER AGE, NEVER DIE, EXCEPT THROUGH ACCIDENT!


OUR WISE MEN HAVE SAID IT IS THE WATERS OF THIS FOUNTAIN WHICH HAVE KEPT US FROM AGING!
THE OLD LEGEND OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH... AND IT'S TRUE!

IT MUST BE! THEY HAVE FOUND ETERNAL LIFE IN THE FOUNTAIN'S WATER. BUT THERE AREN'T MANY OF THEM, SO QUITE A FEW MUST HAVE DIED THROUGH ACCIDENTS OVER THE CENTURIES...
THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH! PHIL, DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS CAN MEAN! AND WE KNOW WHERE IT IS...

THE CAPTIVES WERE THEN IMPRISONED IN A CAGE!
I GO NOW TO CONFER WITH HUNAB ITZA, THE TRUE MAN AND RELIGIOUS LEADER OF MY PEOPLE! HE WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU!

FORGET ABOUT THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH! IT CAN'T DO US ANY GOOD! WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO GET FREE... THESE CAGES ARE MADE OF IRONWOOD...
BUT THE BARS ARE TIED WITH RATTAN... AND I HAVE A KNIFE WITH A BLADE SHARP ENOUGH TO CUT THROUGH RATTAN!

CAUTIOUSLY HE SAWED AT THE STRIPS THAT HELD THE BARS! DARKNESS CAME THROUGH THE MIST...
HURRY, BUB! THEY'RE LIGHTING FIRES ON THE PYRAMID! THE PEOPLE ARE GATHERING THERE! LISTEN... THEY'RE CHANTING! THEY'LL COME FOR US SOON...
GOT ENOUGH CUT THROUGH SO WE CAN GET OUT!

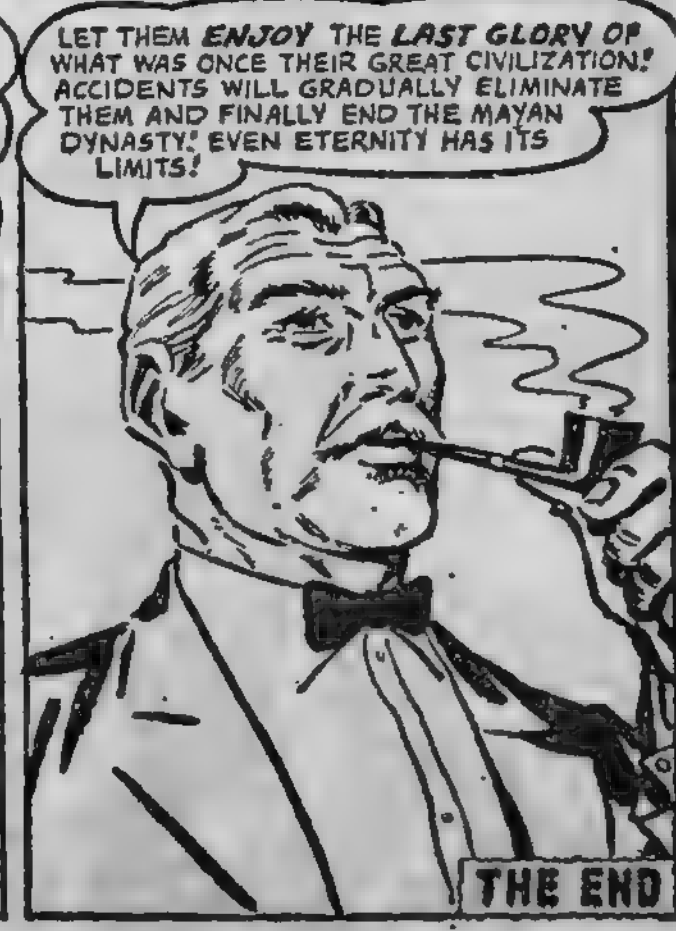
THE GUARDS ARE COMING FOR US!
QUICK! WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE WATER, GRAB A CANOE AND GET TO THE JUNGLE...

HERE'S ONE!
THEY DISCOVERED WE'RE FREE... AND THEY'RE HEADING HERE, KNOWING WE'D TRY TO GET ACROSS THE LAKE TO THE JUNGLE BEYOND!

THEY REACHED LAND AND RACED INTO THE BLACK NIGHT JUNGLE...

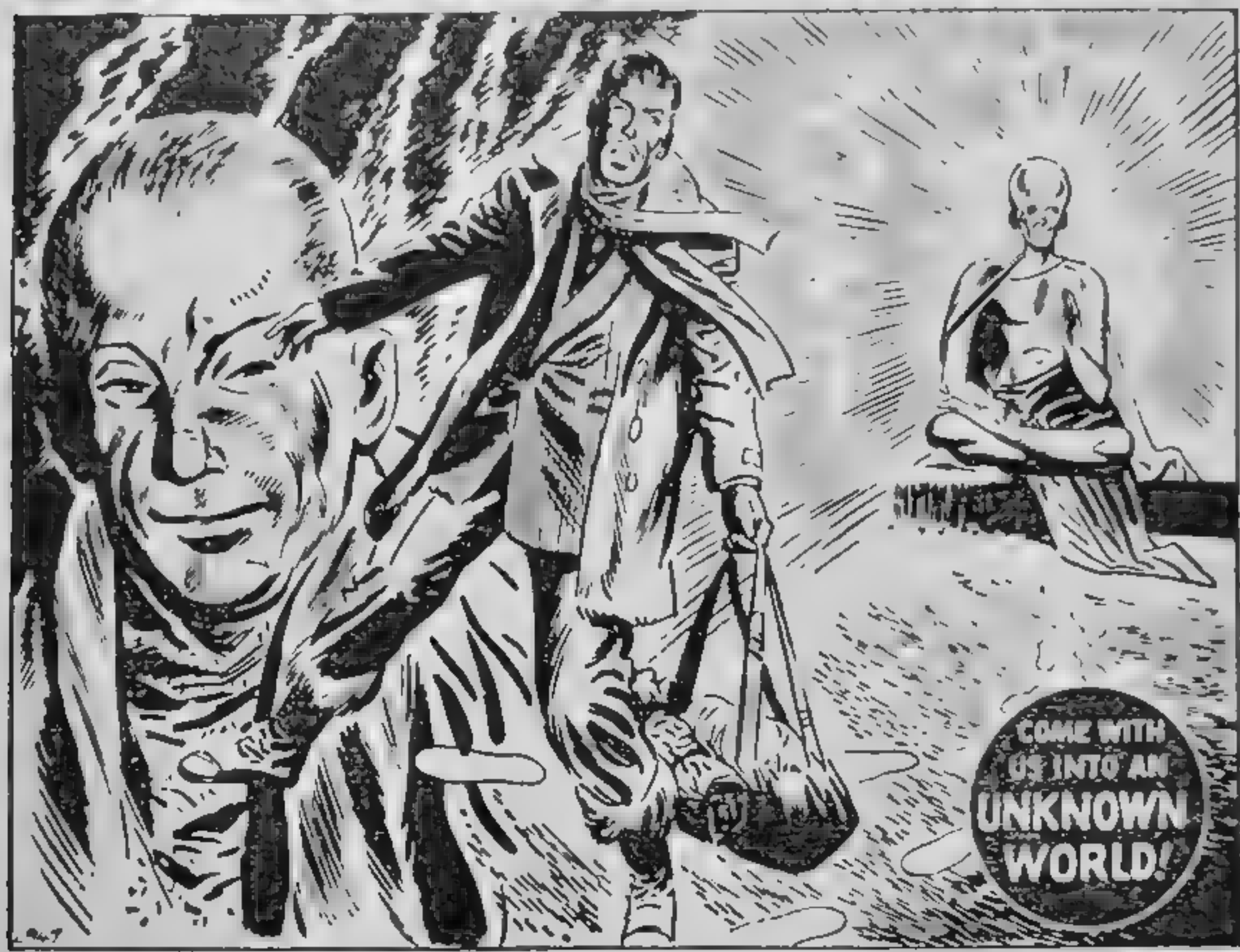
DAYS LATER, THE TWO EXHAUSTED MEN WERE PICKED UP BY A HUNTING PARTY OF FRIENDLY INDIANS...

THEY REACHED CIVILIZATION AND THERE RECUPERATED FROM THEIR DREADFUL ORDEAL!



MASON FOUND ETERNAL LIFE, BUT WHAT GOOD IS ETERNAL LIFE TO A MAN WHO CAN ONLY SIT AND TREMBLE WHEN SOMEONE SAYS

I DARE YOU TO MOVE!

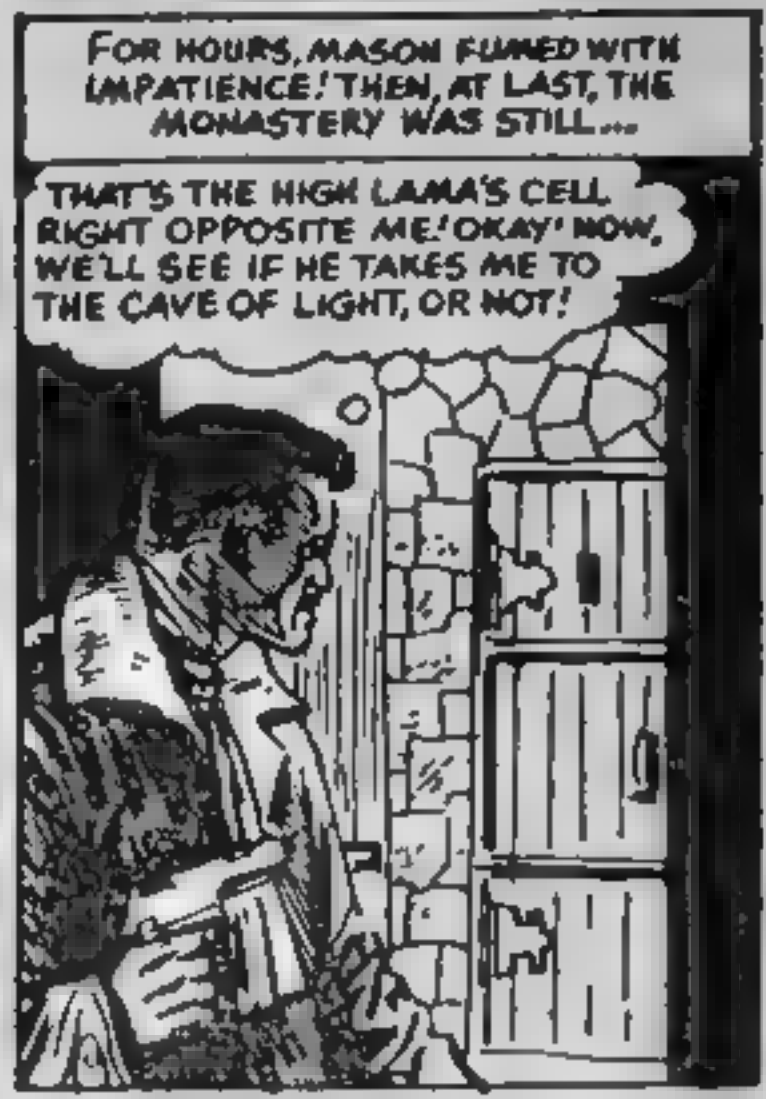


YOU COME WITH WEAPONS, A STRANGER PERHAPS YOU WOULD USE ETERNITY WISELY! BUT HOW CAN I TELL?
SUPPOSE I FORCED YOU TO TAKE ME TO THE CAVE?

IN THAT EVENT THE WISE MAN WHO LIVES IN THE CAVE, LI ORN WOULD PUNISH YOU! YOU WOULD BE A FOOL TO RISK HIS ANGER!
IF HE'S LIVED A THOUSAND YEARS... YEAH, I GUESS IT WOULD BE FOOLISH, AT THAT!

INSIDE, MASON RAGED! BUT HIS FURY DID NOT SHOW ON HIS FACE...
OKAY, I GUESS I KNOW WHEN I'M LICKED!
I REGRET YOU HAVE HAD YOUR JOURNEY FOR NOTHING! BUT UNTIL YOU LEAVE, YOU SHALL BE MY GUEST!

MASON WAS ALL FRIENDLINESS, LATER! NO ONE KNEW, WHEN HE WAS SHOWN TO A SLEEPING CHAMBER, WHAT HE REALLY FELT...
THAT FOOL! IF HE THINKS HE CAN SATISFY ME WITH A MEAL AND SOME FRUIT, HE'LL FIND OUT DIFFERENTLY!


FOR HOURS, MASON FUMED WITH IMPATIENCE! THEN, AT LAST, THE MONASTERY WAS STILL...
THAT'S THE HIGH LAMA'S CELL RIGHT OPPOSITE ME! OKAY! NOW, WE'LL SEE IF HE TAKES ME TO THE CAVE OF LIGHT, OR NOT!

ALL RIGHT, YOU ON YOUR FEET! WE'RE GOING FOR A LITTLE HIKE!

IS THIS HOW YOU REPAY MY HOSPITALITY?
NEVER MIND THE SPEECH! YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ME TO THE CAVE! NOW!

SO... WHAT I COULD NOT GIVE, YOU MEAN TO TAKE BY FORCE! BUT LI ORN WILL NOT BE AS EASILY OVERCOME AS I!
YOUR WISE MAN IN THE CAVE? WE'LL SEE!

DEEP INSIDE, MASON FELT A PANG OF UNCERTAINTY! THE HIGH LAMA WAS TOO CALM, TOO UNAFRAID! BUT HE WOULD NOT TURN BACK NOW...
HOW MUCH FURTHER? IF YOU'RE LEADING ME ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE, YOU'LL PAY FOR IT! I WARN YOU!
WE ARE ALMOST TO THE CAVE! IT LIES JUST AHEAD!

THERE!
THE CAVE OF LIGHT! AT LAST! IN A FEW MINUTES, I'LL BE IMMORTAL!

LI ORN, THIS MAN FORCED ME TO BRING HIM TO THE CAVE! HE MEANS TO ENTER!
YOU BET I DO! AND IF I WERE YOU, I WOULDN'T TRY ANYTHING, OLD MAN!

YOU NEED NOT FEAR! I WILL DO NOTHING TO BAR YOU FROM THE CAVE! THE HIGH LAMA WOULD NOT HAVE BROUGHT YOU IF YOU WERE NOT A DANGEROUS MAN!

NO! LI ORN, YOU MUST STOP HIM! HE MEANS TO USE THE POWER OF THE CAVE FOR EVIL!
YEAH! BUT YOU WERE RIGHT! THE OLD BOY IS WISE! MAYBE I CAN'T KILL HIM, BUT HE WOULDN'T ENJOY A SLUG FROM THIS .45!

ONCE I'M IMMORTAL, I CAN DO ANYTHING! IN TIME I COULD GET ANYTHING I WANT! MONEY! POWER...
THEN WHY NOT ENTER? ARE YOU AFRAID... OF AN OLD MAN?

MASON HESITATED...THIS WAS ALMOST TOO EASY! BUT HE HAD LIVED FOR A LONG TIME WITH HIS DREAM OF POWER...

THE RAYS! I CAN FEEL THEM! GOING RIGHT THROUGH ME!

I'VE DONE IT! I'M IMMORTAL! I'LL LIVE FOREVER! NOTHING CAN STOP ME, NOW!
NOTHING, EXCEPT DEATH!

MASON EXULTED! THE WORLD WAS HIS! THEN, FEAR CLUTCHED AT HIM...
DEATH? I CAN'T DIE! WHAT KIND OF BLUFF ARE YOU HANDING ME?
BLUFF? I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORD!

IT MEANS A TRICK! WHAT DID YOU MEAN JUST NOW?
I MEANT THAT THE CAVE MAKES A MAN IMMORTAL! BUT ONLY SO LONG AS HE REMAINS INSIDE! IF YOU LEAVE, YOU WILL DIE... AT ONCE!

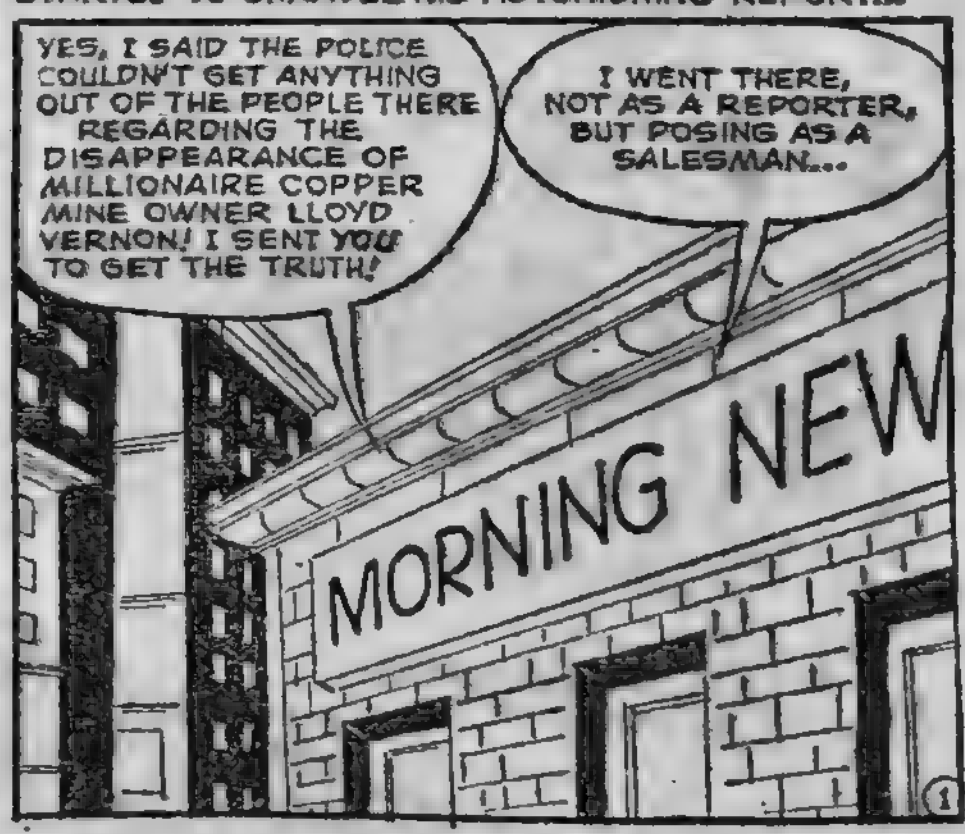
IT HAD TO BE A TRICK! THE HIGH LAMA HAD WARNED MASON THAT LI ORN WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO HANDLE, BUT, STILL, MASON SHOOK...
YOU'RE LYING! YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO OUTSMART ME, TO PUNISH ME!
IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, YOU HAVE ONLY TO LEAVE THE CAVE, AND YOU WILL KNOW!

IT HAD TO BE A TRICK! ONLY, MASON WOULD NEVER KNOW! TO LEAVE THE CAVE WOULD REQUIRE A COURAGE HE DID NOT HAVE! AS THE HIGH LAMA HAD SAID, LI ORN WAS A VERY WISE MAN...
NO... NO...
THE END

WAS IT FOUL PLAY OR WAS SOME DEEPER FORCE AT WORK TO ACCOUNT FOR THE STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN BLACK MOUNTAIN CITY? A PERSEVERING REPORTER ALMOST MISSED THE TRULY FANTASTIC STORY OF AN EERIE PHENOMENON THAT BEGAN...

WHEN VERNON VANISHED

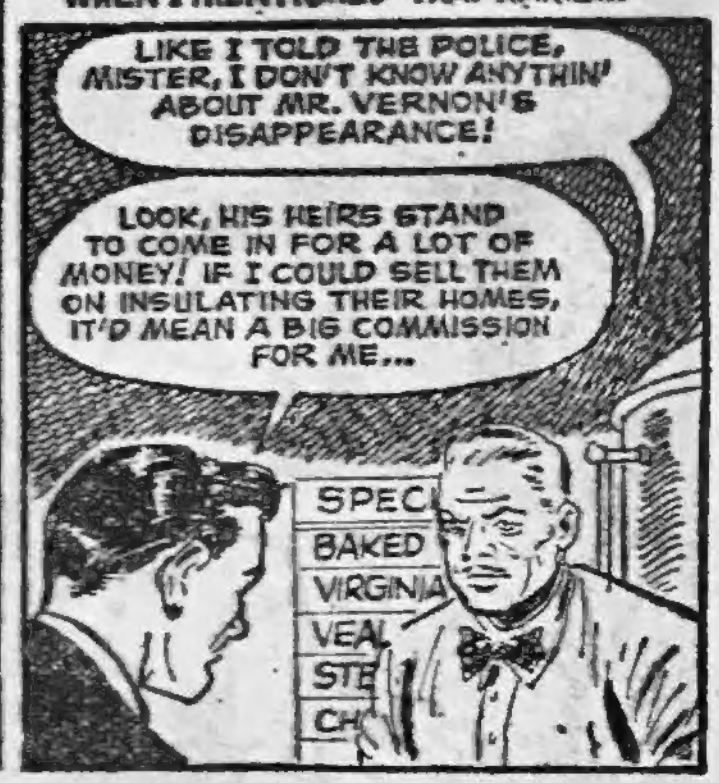
THERE WAS A COLD, HARD GLINT IN THE EYES OF EDITOR MATT HARNEY AS REPORTER ROD MITCHELL STARTED TO UNRAVEL HIS ASTONISHING REPORT...



"IF LLOYD VERNON WAS MISSING, THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF HIS EXISTENCE EVERYWHERE..." ROD MITCHELL SAID! "ALREADY I WAS BEGINNING TO GET A HUNCH..."

"BLACK MOUNTAIN CITY WASN'T A BAD-LOOKING TOWN, BUT THERE WAS A PECULIAR AIR ABOUT THE PLACE, AN AURA OF MYSTERY AND GLOOM..."

"I WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN GETTING A LINE ON VERNON'S HEIRS, BUT THE COUNTERMAN AT THE CAFE I STOPPED AT GAVE ME AN ICY STARE WHEN I MENTIONED THAT NAME..."



"THE VERNON ESTATE WAS BIG ENOUGH TO TEMPT A LOT OF PEOPLE TO TRY SOMETHING UNDERHANDED! AS FOR GRACE VERNON, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, AND I KNEW I WAS GOING TO HAVE A HARD TIME REMEMBERING SHE WAS MY PRIME SUSPECT..."

"I SUSPECTED GRACE VERNON WAS MORE INTERESTED IN HAVING COMPANY THAN IN DISCUSSING INSULATION FOR THE MANSION, FOR SHE EAGERLY INVITED ME IN..."

"I SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING THAT GRACE VERNON WAS NOT LONELY WHILE I WAS AROUND! I STARTED SEEING HER EVERY DAY, DATING HER! THAT SHOULD EXPLAIN WHY MY EXPENSE ACCOUNT CAME PRETTY HIGH, MR. HARNEY..."

"THERE WAS A JOB TO BE DONE, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP ME FROM FEELING LIKE A HEEL WHEN I TOOK GRACE BY THE HAND AND LED HER OUT TO THE GARDEN PATIO..."

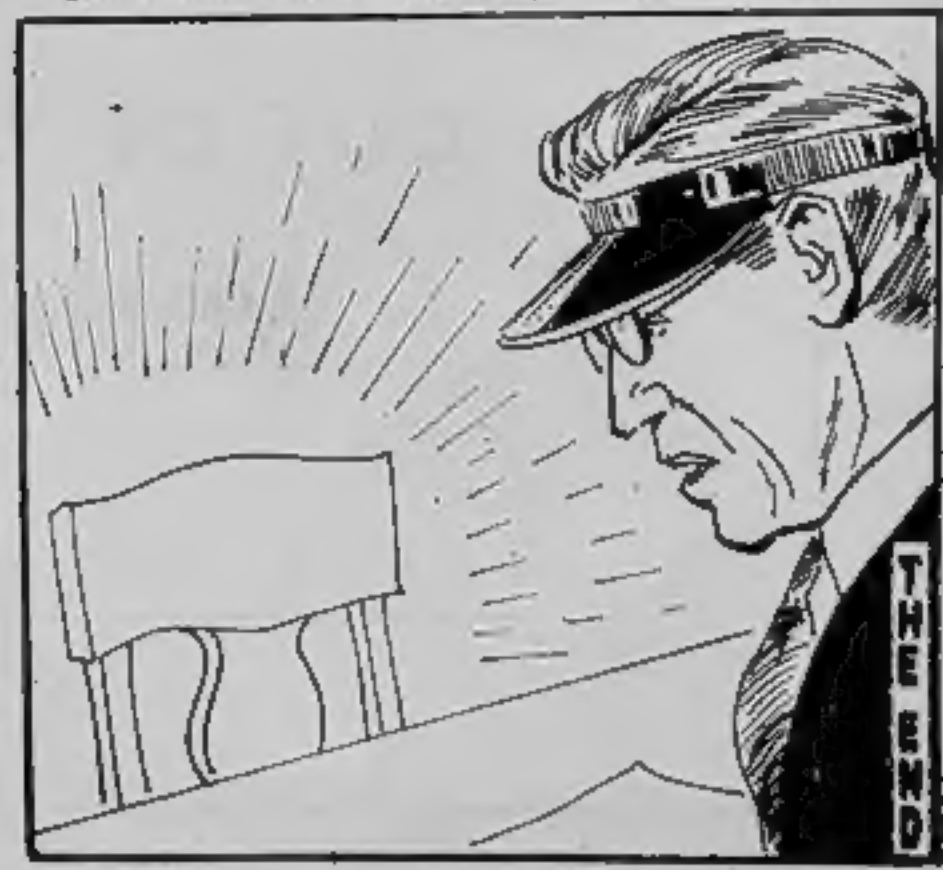
"YES, I PRETENDED TO BE IN LOVE WITH GRACE, BUT NO AMOUNT OF COAXING COULD GET HER TO TELL ME WHAT WAS BEHIND THIS MYSTERY! I HAD NO MORE SUCCESS WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN TOWN WHOM I TRIED TO QUESTION..."

"I FOUND A MAN WHO SEEMED TO BE ON THE VERGE OF TELLING ME SOMETHING, BUT WHEN I WENT TO HIS HOUSE THAT NIGHT..."

"THERE WERE OTHERS WHO SHOWED SOME WILLINGNESS TO TALK FOR A PRICE, BUT EVERY TIME I SHOWED UP WITH THE MONEY, I GOT THE SAME STORY..."

EDITOR MATT HARNEY STOOD STARING OUT OF THE WINDOW MOODILY FOR FIVE MINUTES, THEN TURNED AROUND, STARTLED...

HARNEY SOON KNEW THE TRUTH, FOR ONE MOMENT ROD MITCHELL'S IMAGE WAS SITTING THERE, SILENTLY SMILING...THE NEXT INSTANT, IT WAS GONE!



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